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Art History Oral Documentation Project

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Interviewer: Herbert Hoffmann. Photograph by David Corbin Hoffmann, courtesy of Herbert Hoffmann.

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Frontispiece: Herbert Hoffmann. Photograph by Ursula Corleis Hoffmann, courtesy of Herbert Hoffmann.





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THE [illegible] OF [illegible]

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[illegible text block]



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Richard Cándida Smith, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Program in American Culture at the University of Michigan, interviewed Herbert Hoffmann at his home in Radda-in-Chianti, Italy. A total of 7.15 hours were recorded. The transcript was edited by Katherine P. Smith.



## CURRICULUM VITAE

HERBERT HOFFMANN

Born: April 3, 1930, Berlin

### EDUCATION:

- 1951 B. A., Harvard University, German Literature
- 1952 M. A., Harvard University, History of Art
- 1959 Ph.D., Harvard University, Classical Archaeology and Aegean Prehistory
- 1973 Dr. *Habil.* Hamburg University

### PROFESSIONAL CAREER:

- 1959 Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Greek and Roman Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- 1960-64 Assistant Curator of Ancient Art at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg, Germany
- 1964-65 Assistant Curator of Classical Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
- 1966-73 Curator of Ancient Art, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg
- 1973- Lecturer in Classical Archaeology, University of Hamburg  
Editor, *Hephaistos*  
President, Archaeology and Museum Association

### FELLOWSHIPS AND HONORS:

- 1956-57 "Prix-de-Rome" Fellowship of the American Academy in Rome
- 1965, 1973 Guggenheim Fellowship
- 1972 Elected to Executive Committee of the German Archaeological Society
- 1973-75 British Council European Fellowship
- 1973 Visiting Research Fellow, Merton College, Oxford
- 1974-75 Visiting Member, High Table, King's College, Cambridge

### EXHIBITIONS:

- 1965 *Greek Gold from the Age of Alexander the Great*, Boston, Brooklyn and Virginia museums
- 1969 *Jewellery from the Bible Lands*, Israel Museum, Jerusalem
- 1970 *Dedalic Art*, Hamburg

# THEORY OF THE EARTH

## CHAPTER I

### SECTION I

THE EARTH IS A SPHERE, AND ITS SURFACE IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS, THE NORTH AND SOUTH HALVES, BY A GREAT CIRCLE, CALLED THE EQUATOR. THE PARTS ARE ALSO DIVIDED INTO FOUR QUARTERS, BY TWO OTHER GREAT CIRCLES, CALLED THE MERIDIAN AND THE TROPIC OF CANCER.

### SECTION II

THE EARTH IS COVERED WITH WATER, AND THE PARTS WHICH ARE NOT COVERED WITH WATER ARE CALLED LAND. THE LAND IS DIVIDED INTO SEVEN PARTS, CALLED CONTINENTS, AND THE WATER IS DIVIDED INTO FIVE PARTS, CALLED OCEANS. THE CONTINENTS ARE ASIA, AFRICA, EUROPE, AMERICA, AUSTRALIA, ANTARCTICA, AND THE ISLANDS. THE OCEANS ARE THE PACIFIC, ATLANTIC, INDIAN, ARABIAN, AND ANTARCTIC.

### SECTION III

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### SECTION IV

THE EARTH IS COVERED WITH FIRE, AND THE FIRE IS DIVIDED INTO SEVEN PARTS, CALLED THE ELEMENTS, AND THE ELEMENTS ARE FIRE, AIR, WATER, AND EARTH. THE FIRE IS ALSO DIVIDED INTO SEVEN PARTS, CALLED THE CLIMATES, AND THE CLIMATES ARE THE TROPICAL, SUBTROPICAL, TEMPERATE, COLD, AND POLAR.



- 1970      *Ten Centuries that Shaped the West*, Houston, Dallas, and Ft. Worth  
             museums  
1970      *Vasen der klassischen Antike*, Hamburg  
1972      *Griechische Spiele*, Hamburg
- 

PUBLICATIONS (PARTIAL):

- "The Great Alter at Pergamon," *Classical Bulletin*, 1952.
- "The Architectural Antecedents of the Great Alter at Pergamon," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 11, 1952.
- "An Archaic Lion at Didyma," *Archaeology*, Summer 1953.
- "A Bronze Fulcrum in Providence," *AJA* 57, 1957.
- "Archaic Greek Altars," *AJA* 57, 1963.
- "A Fayence *Rhyton* of the Persian Period," *Bulletin of the Brooklyn Museum* 19, 1958.
- "An Etruscan *Rhyton* in Vienna," *AJA* 63, 1959.
- "The Date of the Panagurische Treasure," *RM* 65, 1959.
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- "Neuerwerbungen der Antikenabteilung im hamburgischen Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, 1940–1960," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 1960.
- "Ewerbungen der Antikenabteilung 1950–1960," *HambJb.* 6, 1961.
- "The Persian Origin of Attic *Rhyta*," *Antike Kunst*, 4, 1961.



*Kunst des Altertums im Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg* (with F. Hewicker). Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1961.

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"Der urartäische Kandelaber in Hamburg und seine Keilinschrift," (with J. Friedrich), *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, " 36, 1961.

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"Helios," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 2, 1963.

"Two Unknown Greek Bronzes of the Archaic Period," *AJA* 68, 1964.

"Some Unpublished Boeotian Satyr Terracottas," *Antike Kunst* 2, 7, 1964.

"Schildbandfragmente aus Dodona," *Festschrift für Eugen von Mercklin*, 1964.

"A Major American Collection of Ancient Art," *Apollo*, October, 1964.

*Greek Gold* (with P. F. Davidson). Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1965.

"Graeco-Scythian Mirrors," *AJA* 69, 1965.





- "Two Athenian Black-figured Amphoras," *The Brooklyn Museum Annual* 5, 1965.
- "Treasure of Alexander," *Arts in Virginia* 6, 1, 1965.
- "Greek Gold Jewelry from the Age of Alexander," *Apollo* November 1965.
- Tarentine Rhyta*. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1966.
- "Letter from Geneva. Iranian Art Treasures," *Apollo* September, 1966.
- "Eine Neue Amphora des Eucharidesmalers," *HambJb* 12, 1967.
- "Master Bronzes from the Classical World," Fogg Art Museum, 1966.
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- Antiker Gold-und Silberschmuck im Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg* (with V. von Claer). Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1968.
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"Knotenpunkte. Zur Bedeutungsstruktur griechischer Vasenbilder," *Hephaistos* 2, 1980.

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*Sotades: Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

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SESSION ONE: 21 MAY, 1998

[Tape I, Side One]

SMITH: We usually start with where and when you were born.

HOFFMANN: I was born on April 3, 1930, in Berlin.

SMITH: In Berlin. Your family was German?

HOFFMANN: No, my family was Austrian, but my father [Manfred Turner Hoffmann] was working in Berlin at the time that I was born.

SMITH: What kind of work was he doing?

HOFFMANN: He was a hat-maker.

SMITH: So, he was a manufacturer?

HOFFMANN: I don't know too much about his work at that early time; I think that he was working for a factory, developing processes for cleaning wool.

SMITH: So he was trained as an engineer?

HOFFMANN: Trained as a chemist. Actually, he became more and more of an inventor.

SMITH: And your mother [Marianne Schleiffer]. Could you tell me a little bit about her?

HOFFMANN: My mother was one of four sisters, of a Viennese Jewish patrician family, each of whom was a doctor.

SMITH: A medical doctor?



HOFFMANN: A Ph.D. Rising through education was very important at the time for Jewish families. In fact, we have a Nobel prize laureate in our family, and other people who have distinguished themselves in the sciences. Lucie Rie was a cousin who became a famous potter, but the arts were less important than the sciences.

SMITH: Did you stay in Germany long, or go back to Austria?

HOFFMANN: No, I think this was just for two years, and then we went back to Austria.

SMITH: And you lived in Vienna?

HOFFMANN: We lived in Vienna and Eisenstadt. My mother's ancestral home is at Eisenstadt, the town of Haydn, where her family had been given land by the Esterházy. The family name is Wolf.

SMITH: So your first education was in Austria, then, and you grew up there?

HOFFMANN: No, my first two school years were actually spent in Czechoslovakia, where my father had another job.

SMITH: In Czechoslovakia?

HOFFMANN: In the Sudetenland, which was ethnically predominantly German at the time.

SMITH: Your mother was German-speaking Jewish.

HOFFMANN: German-Jewish, that kind of background—one thinks of Sigmund Freud. Her father was a physician. Freud sent him patients. There was some family





connection.

SMITH: What was your mother's educational background?

HOFFMANN: Chemistry as well.

SMITH: So both parents were chemists.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: Had they met in university?

HOFFMANN: They met at the university; there is always some joking business about my mother having written my father's Ph.D. thesis for him, but I don't know whether it's true or not. She was certainly the more scholarly one in the family. My father was a do-er.

SMITH: And was he German or Austrian?

HOFFMANN: Austrian as well, yes.

SMITH: But not Jewish.

HOFFMANN: No. No, he married into this rich Jewish family.

SMITH: Was he a Catholic, or a Protestant?

HOFFMANN: He was a Catholic. His background is one of the famous family secrets which I have been trying to investigate, because it seems that his mother was an illegitimate daughter of a Habsburg. There is this royalty which he was always on the one hand very proud of and on the other hand ashamed of, and it wasn't talked about, because on the one hand it was Habsburg, and on the other hand it was



illegitimate. But at the time of our emigration to the United States, or before, in 1938, there was talk about getting a certificate of Aryan noble birth for my father. My aunt was sent to the last surviving member of this branch of the Habsburg family to get a paper which, as ridiculous as it seems to us today, was supposed to save us from the consequences of fascism. But I don't know what came of this.

SMITH: So your mother's Jewishness would have been "forgiven"?

HOFFMANN: That was the idea, yes.

SMITH: Yes. What were your parents' political leanings, or did they have any?

HOFFMANN: I would say apolitical, meaning conservative. In the United States, my mother always voted Democrat, my father Republican. My mother was chairman of the League of Women Voters in the town in which we lived and my father always scoffed at this political activity of hers. I would call her a liberal.

SMITH: Do you remember a lot about Austria? You stayed there until you were eight years old.

HOFFMANN: I remember a good deal, yes.

SMITH: Was there a large extended family?

HOFFMANN: There was an extended family at Eisenstadt with many, many people always. There were never less than ten or twelve for dinner, and the family today is spread all over the world.

SMITH: Did most of them leave during the *Anschluss*?



HOFFMANN: Most of them left, some of them died—I should say, were killed.

SMITH: Yes, given the situation. What were your family's religious practices? Were you raised Jewish?

SMITH: We were, in quotation marks, "enlightened" people. That means religion played very little role, except for my grandmother, who was a pious Jew. She accompanied us to the United States and, as is so often the case in such families, was kept hidden. We were ashamed of Judaism in the family; it was considered, perhaps justifiably, as something dangerous.

SMITH: Well, certainly, in the thirties.

HOFFMANN: I am talking about America now.

SMITH: Yes, in America even.

HOFFMANN: Yes, there was anti-Semitism, I realize today. But at the time I felt very protective of my grandmother. I was very close to her, and I helped her to celebrate the Jewish high holidays by secretly procuring wine for her and that sort of thing.

SMITH: In terms of your future development, was there a lot of emphasis on classical culture or the arts in the family?

HOFFMANN: None whatsoever. My whole development has been an *esprit de contre*, against the will of my father, who was very much hoping that I would go to MIT and follow in his footsteps. I was in opposition to my father from the very





beginning, after our emigration, and this has played a great determining role in shaping my life.

SMITH: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

HOFFMANN: One brother [Kurt Hoffmann], who is seven years older, who is a film producer.

SMITH: In the United States?

HOFFMANN: In Germany. He also went back to Germany.

SMITH: Well, let's talk about the immigration and what you recall of the circumstances surrounding that.

HOFFMANN: Yes, I remember the *Anschluss* very well, when the Germans entered Vienna. I still recall [Kurt] Schuschnigg's abdication address, and the family sitting around the radio listening, some of us in tears. I recall at that time that both my brother and I were very much taken by the excitement of fascism.

SMITH: He would have been a teenager at that time.

HOFFMANN: I would have been eight; he would have been fifteen. I remember being out for a walk with my governess and jumping on a park bench to see Göring driving by, raising my hand in a Hitler salute, like everyone else.

SMITH: Had the family encountered anti-Semitism?

HOFFMANN: Certainly not. Certainly not. In fact, I never encountered anti-Semitism in my life until I came back to Germany in 1960.



SMITH: Really?

HOFFMANN: But I was looking for it then, so I of course provoked it and found it.

SMITH: Okay. Well, perhaps we'll come back to that later.

HOFFMANN: Let me add an anecdote to this. I remember my father was at that time director of a hat factory, and he was asked by the president, "Fred, your people aren't Jewish by any chance, are they?" So, in connection with my hidden grandmother—

SMITH: Yes.

HOFFMANN: I think they all must have known.

SMITH: And yet, it sounds with this effort to get the legitimation certificate, there was some idea that they could stay in Austria.

HOFFMANN: I think that was given up very quickly as events accelerated. We left Austria via Paris. I still remember the two weeks that we spent in Paris sight-seeing. We left first class on the Queen Mary, carrying a grand piano, our library, and all the furnishings. It was amazing, looking back at it today.

SMITH: So the family had no trouble getting its possessions out.

HOFFMANN: I think it cost a lot of money, yes.

SMITH: Because, already, after *Kristallnacht*, there were extensive restrictions put on travel.

HOFFMANN: A novel, by [Franz] Werfel, has been written about my great uncle,

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Sándor Wolf, whom I referred to yesterday. I can't remember the title of it. He was in fact imprisoned by the Nazis. He would be interrogated and beaten during the day, and released to go home at night. I think they were softening him up for money, for payments in order to get us all out. He was released and, as I say, we all left, first class.

SMITH: So not just you, but your father and mother—

HOFFMANN: My father, my mother, my aunt, and my grandmother went to the United States. Sándor Wolf went to Israel. Cousins of mine, the Hungarian branch of the family, went to Israel and South America, and some even went to Australia.

SMITH: Now, your uncle was an archaeologist, you were saying.

HOFFMANN: My uncle was an archaeologist, a man of letters, and an art collector. His collection was sold by his sister at auction in Luzern, after his death. It was taken out of Austria—the German expression is *bei Nacht und Nebel*—and it suddenly turned up in Switzerland and was auctioned off.

SMITH: What kind of art did he collect?

HOFFMANN: He collected everything, but mainly medieval things—books, paintings, sculptures. He had a huge collection.

SMITH: What kind of archaeology was he involved with?

HOFFMANN: He was an excavator, a field archaeologist. He was one of the supporters and endowers of the Carnuntum excavation. He carried out his own

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excavations in and around Eisenstadt where we lived, excavating Roman villas. He used to excavate wherever there were chestnut trees, because where there were chestnuts, there were Roman settlements. He also excavated Celtic remains. A very famous burial at Donnerskirchen was excavated by him, and he found a quite remarkable thereomorphic urn, which is actually still in the family house at Eisenstadt, which is now the Landesmuseum.

SMITH: This is the family home, where you grew up.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: Was it taken over by the state, or sold?

HOFFMANN: No, after many years it was half sold and half donated.

SMITH: Did your family have property claims after the war that you know of?

HOFFMANN: I don't know about this. Excuse me, I should modify that. Yes, I do know about it. A brewery belonging to an uncle of mine in Czechoslovakia was restituted. And the proceeds of the beer brewery, in fact, went into this house.

SMITH: Oh, really? Well, that was nice for you.

HOFFMANN: Yes, my aunt came in at a moment when we really needed it.

SMITH: Were you close to your uncle, Sándor Wolf?

HOFFMANN: Yes, yes, he was my idol, my father figure, really.

SMITH: But he lived in Israel after you emigrated, or in Palestine.

HOFFMANN: Yes, I never saw him again. There is a nice story which I'll tell you,

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound perspective on the future. The author points out that the study of history is not merely a collection of facts and dates, but a process of critical thinking and analysis. It is through the study of history that we can learn from the mistakes of the past and avoid them in the future.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the role of the individual in the history of the United States. It is argued that the actions of individuals, particularly those of the founding fathers, have shaped the course of the nation's history. The author points out that the study of the lives of these individuals is essential for a full understanding of the history of the United States. It is through the study of the lives of these individuals that we can learn about the values and ideals that have shaped the nation.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the role of the government in the history of the United States. It is argued that the actions of the government, particularly those of the federal government, have shaped the course of the nation's history. The author points out that the study of the actions of the government is essential for a full understanding of the history of the United States. It is through the study of the actions of the government that we can learn about the values and ideals that have shaped the nation.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the role of the people in the history of the United States. It is argued that the actions of the people, particularly those of the common people, have shaped the course of the nation's history. The author points out that the study of the actions of the people is essential for a full understanding of the history of the United States. It is through the study of the actions of the people that we can learn about the values and ideals that have shaped the nation.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the role of the future in the history of the United States. It is argued that the actions of the future, particularly those of the future generations, will shape the course of the nation's history. The author points out that the study of the actions of the future is essential for a full understanding of the history of the United States. It is through the study of the actions of the future that we can learn about the values and ideals that have shaped the nation.

briefly. Later on in my career, I think that I must have been at the Boston Museum [of Fine Arts], I'm not sure, I was asked by the State of Israel, for their twenty-fifth anniversary I believe it was, to put on a jewelry exhibition, so I traveled around to various museums collecting jewelry for an exhibition at the [Israel Museum], Jerusalem. I was in Haifa, looking around, and it all seemed very familiar to me. There was a whole gallery of Fayum portraits; I asked the curator where these had come from, and they were in fact donated by Sándor Wolf.

SMITH: How interesting. What led your family to decide to come to the United States as opposed to emigrating to Palestine, or other places?

HOFFMANN: The family version of it is that we never emigrated, because we weren't Jews, you see. My father started going to the United States as early as 1933 or 1934, making business connections, and by 1938 he had landed a very good contract with a hat factory to develop an entire plant for cleaning wool, which was his specialty. So that was the reason for going to the United States. In fact, during the early years of my life, between 1934 and 1938, my father wasn't around very much; he was usually in the United States.

SMITH: Oh, really? So then there was no question of trouble with visas or that sort of thing?

HOFFMANN: No, not from the American side.

SMITH: Did you know English at all when you came to the U.S.?



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JOHN B. HOGAN  
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HOFFMANN: I had an English tutor in Vienna, and I learned very quickly.

SMITH: So you were just plunged into the schools.

HOFFMANN: I immediately became American—baseball, and all the rest of it.

SMITH: So where did your family settle?

HOFFMANN: In Newburyport, Massachusetts, about one hour by car north of Boston.

SMITH: And you went to regular American schools?

HOFFMANN: I went to a very special school called Governor Dummer Academy, as a day student. When I say "special school," I mean it was a snobby school.

SMITH: So it was a private academy.

HOFFMANN: A private academy, but apparently if you lived in Newburyport you were able to go either for free or for very reduced tuition. After the first year in public school in Newburyport, I was able to skip a year because my European schooling was in advance of what American kids at that age had learned. So I did the two years at Newburyport, at the grammar school, and I graduated and went to Governor Dummer.

SMITH: Which was a high school?

HOFFMANN: Which was high school level, yes.

SMITH: How would it compare to a typical American high school in terms of the relationship between sports activities and college preparatory training, or shop

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training?

HOFFMANN: I remember the emphasis at Governor Dummer in those days was entirely on sports. It wasn't a very intellectual place. But neither was Newburyport High School when I think of it.

SMITH: So were you athletic as a high schooler?

HOFFMANN: No, I never was an athlete. I always chose the path of least resistance, like skiing in the winter or golf in the summer, which would enable me to disappear after a half hour or an hour and go for a swim. Skiing was really my only sport, the only sport which I maintained after prep school; I was on the ski team at Harvard and I enjoyed that a lot.

SMITH: Downhill skiing or cross country?

HOFFMANN: Downhill, slalom.

SMITH: So you spent a lot of time in New Hampshire?

HOFFMANN: I spent a lot of time in New Hampshire, yes; in fact, I used to work there in the summers as a waiter in a hotel resort, making money to buy my own car, the sort of thing that boys did at the time.

SMITH: What about your intellectual development at this time: were you reading widely?

HOFFMANN: Intellectual development happened I think outside of my official schooling. My parents, as I mentioned earlier, had brought over our library and I

1. The first part of the report discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and the role of the accounting system in providing reliable financial information.

2. The second part of the report describes the various methods used to collect and analyze data, including interviews, surveys, and focus groups.

3. The third part of the report presents the results of the study, showing that there is a significant correlation between the use of accounting systems and the accuracy of financial reporting.

4. The fourth part of the report discusses the implications of the findings for practice and policy, suggesting that organizations should invest in accounting systems to improve their financial management.

5. The fifth part of the report concludes the study and provides recommendations for further research.



used to take books and read them. I had a friend at Governor Dummer who was interested in Nietzsche and Schopenhauer and all this sort of thing, but it wasn't officially encouraged; this was something we did on our own. We read wildly . . . widely and wildly! [laughter] I remember Will Durant's *Story of Philosophy* was something that fascinated me at the time, when I was fifteen years old.

SMITH: So your library at home of course was largely German language.

HOFFMANN: German, French, and English.

SMITH: Modern books, mostly?

HOFFMANN: Up to that period, and also older books, a lot of philosophy. I think it must have been in part Sándor Wolf's library from Eisenstadt, because I can't imagine either of my parents having bought many of the first editions that we owned.

SMITH: Interesting. So I imagine you continued to speak German at home?

HOFFMANN: German was forbidden at home, so we were all speaking perforce a kind of pidgin English. We were forbidden by my father, who wanted us to assimilate. That was interesting.

SMITH: Now this must have been easier for you than for your brother.

HOFFMANN: My brother was never around; he went away to school. He was a boarding student at Exeter Academy, and then he left for college and was never very much around. I was close to him at that time; he was . . . what is it, I am searching for the expression . . . a guiding figure; in fact, everything that he did I would do with



a five or seven years delay, like returning to Europe.

SMITH: Was he also in rebellion against your father?

HOFFMANN: My brother was also in rebellion, but he was officially the intellectual of the family, so his intellectualism was encouraged because they saw no hope in him becoming a scientist, whereas with me it was different.

SMITH: So you were being disciplined to—

HOFFMANN: To follow in my father's steps. My brother was a philosopher from the beginning. He taught philosophy at Harvard, and later on in Munich.

SMITH: Which field of philosophy?

HOFFMANN: I don't know what he taught at Harvard; I think probably the general survey course, as a section assistant or something like that, whereas in Munich he taught American philosophers. At first he was American vice-consul in Munich and then he went to the university and taught his specialty, which by that time was American philosophers.

SMITH: So, the pragmatists?

HOFFMANN: The pragmatists: William James, John Dewey.

SMITH: Well, about your rebellion. How did you act out this rebellion against your father? It doesn't sound like you necessarily became the intellectual, initially.

HOFFMANN: I became intellectual at Harvard. I started studying German language and literature as part of a rebellion, the idea being to preserve the family tradition,

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already with the thought of going back to Europe at the back of my mind. I studied German literature with Karl Viëtor, who was a celebrity at the time, his specialty being Goethe. And when Viëtor died, his successor, a man by the name of Heinrich Schneider, who had been a librarian at Wölffenbittel, a [Gotthold Ephraim] Lessing expert, failed to inspire me. In fact, he bored me and I changed my field. But not before having written a bachelor's thesis, significantly, on mysticism. I wrote a thesis on the use of allegory in the mystic poetry of Friedrich von Spee, and this later became a strain, let us say, which became more important: mysticism, spirituality, metaphysics.

SMITH: How did you define mysticism at this time?

HOFFMANN: At this time I didn't really know what it meant, but I was attracted to Spee's poetry, which was mystic—very beautiful, very lyric.

SMITH: I don't know Spee. Is he related in some way to Jakob Böhme?

HOFFMANN: Yes, very much in that tradition: Spee, Böhme, Meister Eckehart. Spee is seventeenth century, and he wrote passion plays.

SMITH: Lutheran?

HOFFMANN: Catholic. Counter-reformation. In fact, I first went back to Germany with the idea of seeing his manuscripts, which are kept in Austria—actually Italy, today. I'm just searching my mind. It's near Innsbruck, anyway. There is a monastery which has Spee's manuscripts. It is at Sterzing-Vipitena.





SMITH: So you were still pursuing the idea of becoming a literary scholar?

HOFFMANN: At that time, yes. Then I changed my field. I got into art history. Again, the ghost of Sándor Wolf was hovering in the background.

SMITH: Was he still alive at this time?

HOFFMANN: He was alive, but I had no contact with him.

SMITH: Not even writing, letters?

HOFFMANN: Not even writing, don't ask me why. It never occurred to me. But friendships made at Harvard with people in art history convinced me to change my field.

SMITH: Other students?

HOFFMANN: Other students. Also, by this time I had gone back to Europe, with Goethe's *Italian Journey* in my knapsack. I had done the classical Italian journey, and I had visited the classical sites that Goethe had visited: Agrigentum and Segesta in Sicily, and Rome. I had made the acquaintance in Rome during that first trip of Ludwig Curtius, a famous archaeologist who had been befriended by my older brother. My brother had given me a letter to Curtius, and Curtius was quite influential. These were the last years of his life.

SMITH: Were you thinking in terms of antique art history then, ancient art history?

HOFFMANN: I did my M.A. in art history in one year and changed to classical archaeology, because Curtius had given me a letter to his friend and pupil, George



Hanfmann, at Harvard, introducing me, and I immediately liked Hanfmann and changed my field. So I did my Ph.D. in classical archaeology in the Department of Fine Arts at Harvard.

SMITH: I would like to just step back a little. What led you to decide to go to Harvard as opposed to other places?

HOFFMANN: My brother had gone there. My brother has a Ph.D. from Harvard, and it was the obvious choice. Also, you got into Harvard, I believe, without having to take entrance examinations if you had been to Governor Dummer.

SMITH: So your father, even though perhaps he wanted you to go to MIT, could not have been too unhappy.

HOFFMANN: He was quite happy in the end, yes. He was always very happy when I produced books which he could put on the coffee table. There were quite a number of them.

SMITH: Did your parents stay in the United States?

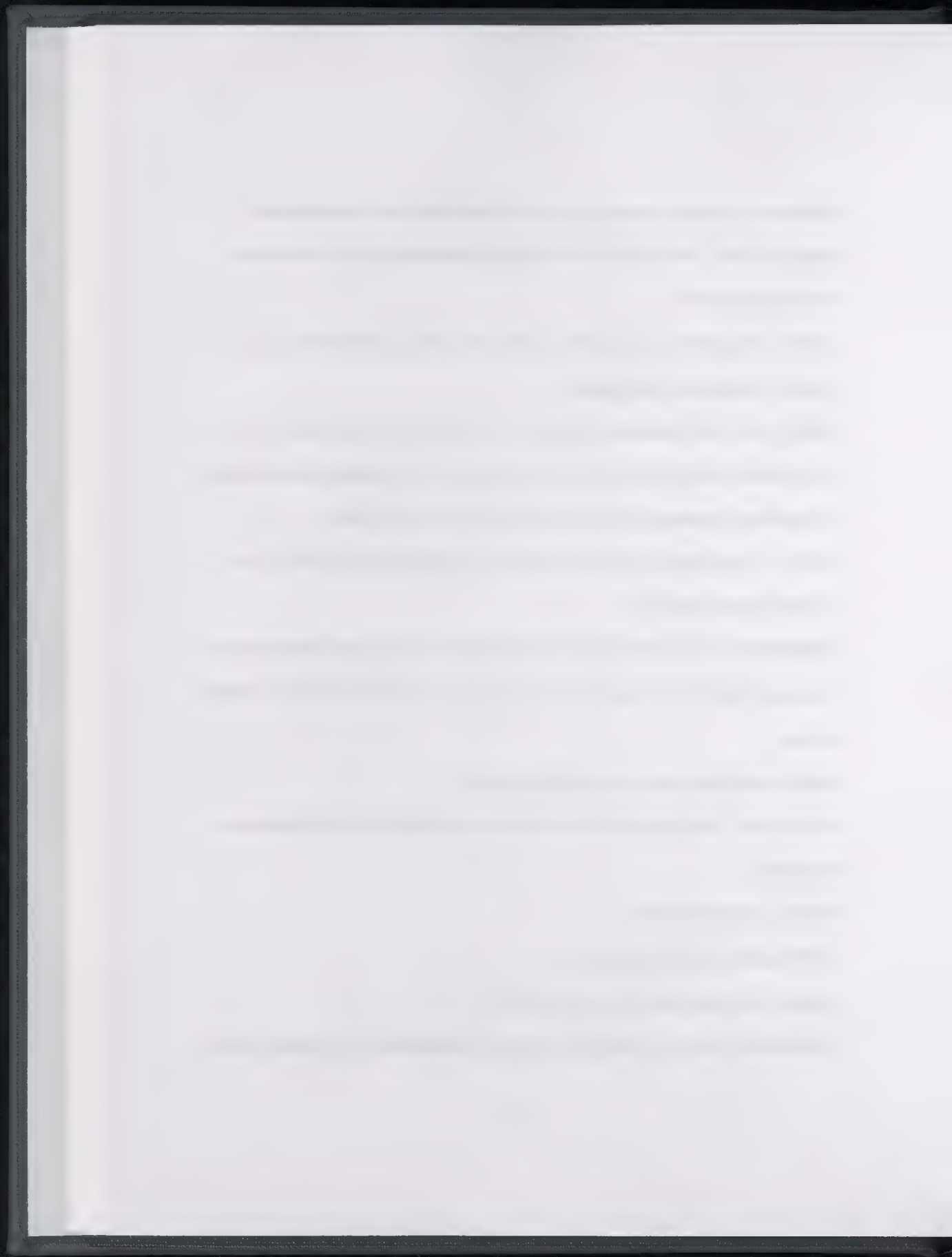
HOFFMANN: They stayed in the United States, and both died and are buried near their home.

SMITH: In Massachusetts?

HOFFMANN: In Massachusetts, yes.

SMITH: And you became an American citizen?

HOFFMANN: Yes, and I stayed an American citizen until the 1970s, when I had to





renounce my American citizenship in order to get a German *Beamtung*. At that time you couldn't become a *Beamter* unless you were a German, and I was at that time interested in being professor at the university, so I gave up my American citizenship. Actually, I could have it back, but it would involve spending money and so on.

SMITH: So, currently, you are a German?

HOFFMANN: A German, yes. It seems odd.

SMITH: Well, it's a not untypical cosmopolitan journey. When did you start reading classical literature?

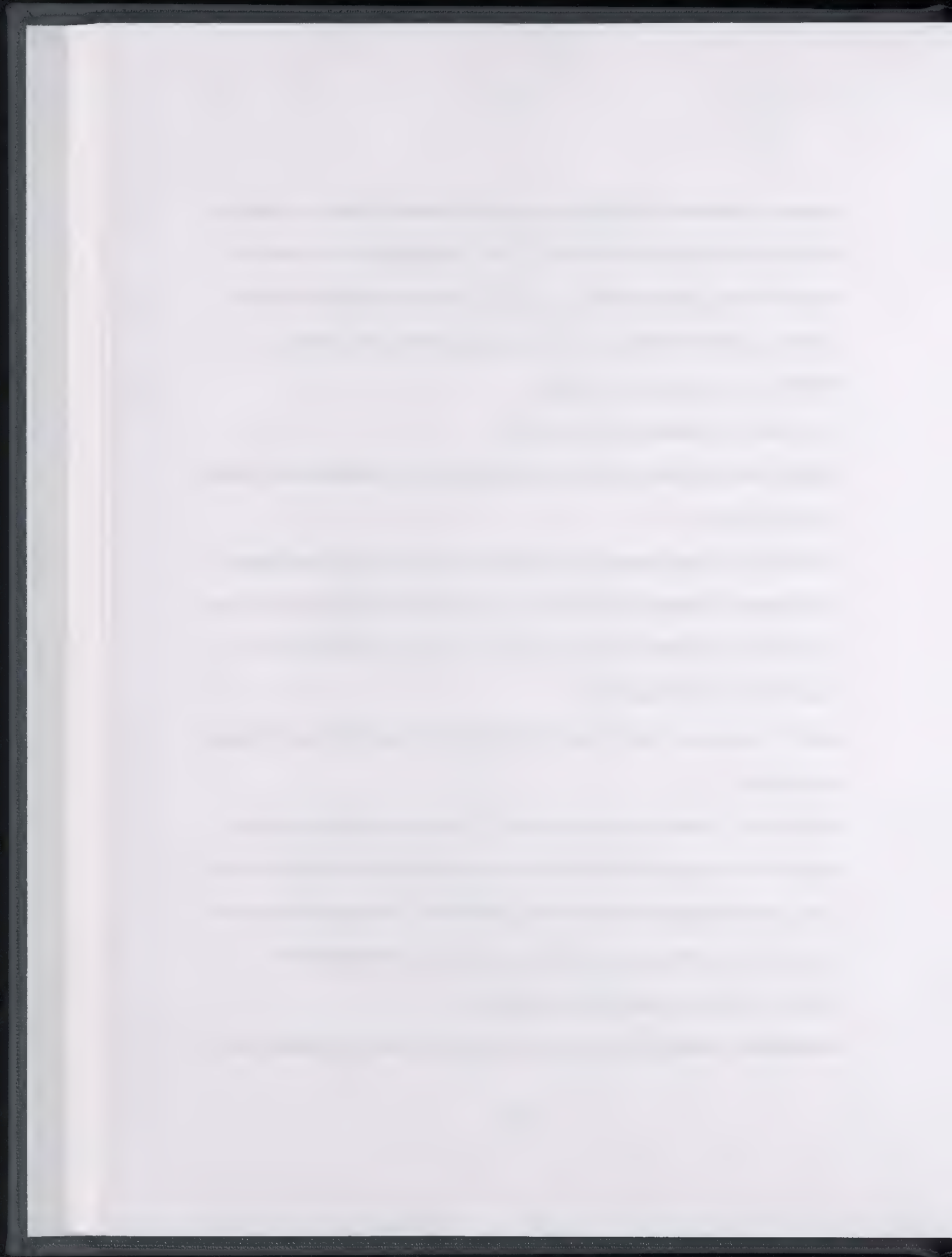
HOFFMANN: I started reading classical literature at Harvard, as an undergraduate even, because I felt attracted to Werner Jaeger, who was then a professor at Harvard, and teaching his still famous course on *paideia*, which is also the title of his three-volume book on Greek education.

SMITH: Can you say a little bit about how this may have shaped the way you looked at Greek art?

HOFFMANN: It didn't, really, that came later. I looked at Greek art through the eyes of German romanticism throughout my entire Harvard education, and I looked at Greek art also through the eyes of the Fogg Art Museum's aestheticism, in terms of style. You will see that my early writings are very much in the Harvard vein.

SMITH: So you were trained to be a connoisseur?

HOFFMANN: I was trained entirely to be a connoisseur. Also, my friendship with



Bernard Bothmer, who at that time was the curator of Egyptian art at the Brooklyn Museum, was very important for me.

SMITH: Did you know John Coolidge? Did you take his museum course?

HOFFMANN: Oh, yes, of course.

SMITH: Before we get into the museum course, could you talk a little bit about George Hanfmann as a personality and how he worked with students?

HOFFMANN: Yes, Hanfmann was a charismatic teacher, a charismatic personality, and he also was very down-to-earth. He taught his students to use their eyes, to see, before they started theorizing about a work of art, to make sure that it was authentic and not a fake.

SMITH: How were you trained to tell the difference between an authentic piece and a fake?

HOFFMANN: Well, using originals in the collection at Harvard, he would teach us how a fake looked and how an original looked.

SMITH: So it was the "eye"?

HOFFMANN: The eye, always. Hanfmann would take his students to Boston and New York to visit galleries and art dealers. They would be able to take original works of art in their hands, and without having any labeled information to fall back on he would ask them, "Well, what is it that you are looking at? Describe what you are seeing," and so on.



SMITH: How was your vision refined, and what was the language that you would use to describe and criticize? What was the process of sharpening?

HOFFMANN: I can't tell you much about that. Nothing terribly original, I think. Quite conventional, actually, when I read my early things. I am amazed today how good my English was then, but there was nothing unusual in my approach. I think, looking back at it, that it was simply conformism: that was the way, and those were the words that were used for talking about works of art.

SMITH: I ask this in part because with the people we have interviewed who have been trained at Harvard, the "eye" always comes up, but it's very difficult to get a sense of what that meant, so perhaps it was just simply a sense of "rightness," and not a theoretical approach, certainly.

HOFFMANN: Yes, I mean, certainly, theory was far from my mind. Perhaps I had a poetic vein at that time which helped me describe, but it was all intuitive.

SMITH: And the principle was that if you saw enough original work—

HOFFMANN: Exactly—then you would "know."

SMITH: Could you talk a little bit about John Coolidge's museum course?

HOFFMANN: No, in fact, I never took his museum course. I audited his lectures, but I don't recall having taken his museum course. That was a long-term program that you did, and I heard [Jakob] Rosenberg, I heard [Frederick] Deknatel. It was more art-historically oriented.



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SMITH: And the principle continued to be grasping style and attribution—

HOFFMANN: Style, yes. Attribution was becoming important at that time. This was of course the period of [John Davidson] Beazley. I recall now in this connection that one of my friendships at that time was with Dietrich von Bothmer.

[Tape I, Side Two]

HOFFMANN: Dietrich von Bothmer got me interested in attribution scholarship, and for years, in fact, that was one of my strengths—attributing vases. Actually, Beazley quotes my attributions for a good many Attic vases in his *Attic Red-Figure Vase Painters*, so I was very proud of that.

SMITH: How do you feel about attribution theory, or attribution work, at the present time?

HOFFMANN: Boring. In one word. I think that it was important at the time, but that time came and went and it no longer interests me today.

SMITH: Do you think that the attributions stand?

HOFFMANN: By and large, yes.

SMITH: Are they useful?

HOFFMANN: Very useful to me, yes, in other ways.

SMITH: Right. So that has established a foundation?

HOFFMANN: Exactly.

SMITH: In *Sotades* [: *Symbols of Immortality in Greek Vases*], you do not seem to

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question the issue of attribution, you just take it as a given.

HOFFMANN: I should say that I did take every piece attributed to Sotades in my hands and I spent years traveling all over the world, really, in search of vases by Sotades. Of course, I did ask myself, Is this really Sotades? and I found no reason to question Beazley's attributions of anything. I added some of my own, but that was the stand from which I departed.

SMITH: If we could stay in the 1950s and address this question of attribution, could you reconstruct the process of analyzing a piece that was unattributed, or still in question? You were saying that attribution is not your thing, but then—

HOFFMANN: I would say it was the inner computer that provided the attribution; I would know at a glance, this painter or that painter, and if I had to document the attribution I would go to the Beazley archive or to Dietrich's office in New York and go through all the material to see if I was right or wrong.

SMITH: Okay. But it was largely intuitive?

HOFFMANN: Largely intuitive. It's graphology, basically. You get to know the handwriting.

SMITH: Who were the other faculty at Harvard that were important for you?

HOFFMANN: There was Ernst Kitzinger, a medieval man, whose work I admired. I have mentioned Werner Jaeger. There was Professor [Robert] Ulich, who had the chair in the history of education, whose courses I used to visit regularly. In fact,





Ulich was a friend of an aunt of mine, who was at that time living in Cambridge, and there was a close connection because he would come out and visit in Newburyport. Other people at the moment I can't recall.

SMITH: What about your friends?

HOFFMANN: Oh, there was Sterling Dow, of course, who was crucial inasmuch as he forced me to learn Greek. I entered Harvard with no knowledge of Greek whatsoever and very little knowledge of Latin, Latin being taught at Governor Dummer by the baseball coach, who didn't know very much himself. Sterling Dow would give me private tutorials, and he insisted that I take crash courses during the summer to bring my knowledge of Greek up to par. You see, Greek was not required in the archaeology course in the Department of Fine Arts. Those were the philologists; there was this split between the linguistic and the stylistic.

SMITH: Did you do much work in philology?

HOFFMANN: I did very little at the time; it's something that I started doing postgraduate, so to speak. Excuse me, post-Ph.D. I should say, not postgraduate.

SMITH: Yes, right. But as I understand, one of the key traditional methods in archaeological work is to try to relate the object to a citation.

HOFFMANN: Yes, of course, and this is something that I became painfully aware of as a gap in my Fogg Art Museum education. I filled it in progressively as I went back to Germany.

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SMITH: But perhaps there is a strength of just looking at the object as a thing in and of itself.

HOFFMANN: It can be seen that way. But today I feel that a holistic approach is better.

SMITH: What was the tenor of your personal relationship with the faculty? It was friendly, I assume, but did they remain somewhat distant? Or were you on a more intimate level with them?

HOFFMANN: The faculty were distant from the students, except for George Hanfmann, whose office I could walk in and out of any time.

SMITH: Did he influence you in your decision to do your dissertation on the *rhÿta*?

HOFFMANN: Hanfmann was actually against it. Looking back at it now, I think that I owe a lot to Dietrich von Bothmer for that decision.

SMITH: Why was Hanfmann against it?

HOFFMANN: Because Hanfmann wanted me to do something broader, something with more ideas. In fact, I have been more faithful to Hanfmann since his death, in more recent writings, than I was at the time.

SMITH: What about student life? Could you tell me a little bit about your friends and what their interests were, and how you might have functioned as a community of young men?

HOFFMANN: At that time I managed to live outside college, in an apartment house

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound perspective on the future. The author points out that the study of history is not merely a collection of facts and dates, but a process of critical thinking and analysis. It is through the study of history that we can learn from the mistakes of the past and avoid them in the future.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the role of the individual in the history of the United States. It is argued that the actions of individuals have shaped the course of the nation's history. The author points out that the study of history is not merely a study of the past, but a study of the present. It is through the study of history that we can learn about the values and beliefs of the people who have shaped the nation.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound perspective on the future. The author points out that the study of history is not merely a collection of facts and dates, but a process of critical thinking and analysis. It is through the study of history that we can learn from the mistakes of the past and avoid them in the future.

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which we called "O'Sullivan's Jungle." Most of my friends were older, and most of them were friends of my brother's, again. One of them was Harold Reiche, who has just died. Harold went on to become a professor, I believe, of philosophy at MIT. At that time he was writing a thesis on either [Karl] Jaspers or [Martin] Heidegger, and the pre-Socratic philosophers. And so there is a friendship which was instrumental. Another friend was a poet called Claudio Guillén, who lived in that house.

SMITH: Was he Spanish?

HOFFMANN: A Spanish poet doing Romance languages. A third friend was an Indian called Hussein Daramsi; I think his nickname was "Dee." But his interests were more in women than intellectual things. Another friend was Edward Kern, also a friend of my brother's, who went on to become an education editor at *Life* magazine. He was a great help to me with *Sotades* because he really edited the whole manuscript. He's still a close friend.

SMITH: These are all men who were somewhat older than you, then?

HOFFMANN: All my brother's age. [laughter] I had really no friends, with one exception: Max Kempner, who was the son of the distinguished Judge Kempner of the Nuremberg trials, and Max was an art historian. In fact, it was he who persuaded me to change fields from German to the Fogg. I don't know what has become of him.

SMITH: So it sounds like you were, at the age of twenty, living with people in their late twenties.



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HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: And your group was largely not terribly American in its composition.

HOFFMANN: No, at that time I had become pretty much of a loner, I would say.

Very intellectual. At that time I was very much into Catholicism in a literal sense.

SMITH: Did you convert?

HOFFMANN: We all converted instantly in 1938 when we came to America, in New York. The first thing that my father insisted upon was that we go to some cathedral in New York and officially convert to Catholicism.

SMITH: And then you were raised as a Catholic?

HOFFMANN: I was raised as a Catholic. I would go to the Catholic priests in Newburyport and take confession and the sacrament. I would lie in confession because I had no sins to confess. I would invent them. I would get the proper Catholic bad conscience, you see, and I would have something to confess.

SMITH: Do you think this was an issue of convenience, or was there a genuine faith on your parents' part?

HOFFMANN: No, it was an issue between my father and my mother. I would say today that my father, with clenched teeth, insisted on religious conformism. He would go to mass and my mother would refuse to accompany him. I realized at that age that the whole thing was . . . what's the word I am looking for?

SMITH: So you realized that it was hypocritical.



HOFFMANN: Hypocritical, and it was very painful for me, yes.

SMITH: So even on your father's part, it was hypocritical.

HOFFMANN: I realized that on my father's part it was hypocritical.

SMITH: And your mother was caught in between.

HOFFMANN: My mother was caught in between and I was caught in between because of my Jewish grandmother. We would have our private "blackouts" long after the war was over. When my Jewish grandmother would celebrate her festivals, like Yom Kippur, and so on, my father would pull down the curtains so that the neighbors wouldn't see.

SMITH: And she didn't seek out a synagogue?

HOFFMANN: There was no opportunity in Newburyport of seeking out a synagogue.

SMITH: No?

HOFFMANN: No. Newburyport is a very Wasp place; I'm not even sure there were any other Jewish people in Newburyport.

SMITH: Okay. So at Harvard you were still somewhat religious, or you were pursuing these interests in Catholic mysticism?

HOFFMANN: That was a phase which ended when I left America.

SMITH: Which was ten years later, at least.

HOFFMANN: I don't recall that I ever went to church when I was in New York.





SMITH: What about your interests in music or literature or art at this time?

HOFFMANN: An interest in music, yes, very strong. I would queue up for hours on end to hear a concert by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Again Max Kempner and I would go together. He was very musical as well. I played piano; I took lessons for about ten years.

SMITH: So your interest was largely classical?

HOFFMANN: Classical.

SMITH: Did you have any interest in jazz?

HOFFMANN: None whatsoever.

SMITH: In terms of classical music, was it eighteenth and nineteenth century, largely, or were you also following modern music, say [Arnold] Schönberg, or [Charles] Ives?

HOFFMANN: None of it. It was very classical, especially chamber music.

SMITH: What about literature? Were you reading contemporary novels?

HOFFMANN: I only started reading widely on coming back to Europe, because the whole time in America was spent in specialization, very single-mindedly career making, and there literally was no time to read a novel.

SMITH: What about your interest in art?

HOFFMANN: My interests in art were a bit broader.

SMITH: So you followed modern art to some degree?



HOFFMANN: Not really, not at that time. This is something, again, that came about in Europe when I had, which I'll tell you about later, a complete turning in life.

SMITH: What about the work that you do as a sculptor? Were you drawing or working with your hands then?

HOFFMANN: Absolutely none of it. This is something that came about in Europe. I actually pursue three careers today. One is as a scholar, the other is as a sculptor, and the third, which I haven't mentioned yet, is as a psychotherapist. This all came about in Europe.

SMITH: You went back to Europe for the first time in '51, approximately?

HOFFMANN: I went back to Europe for the first time in 1948, and I traveled widely at that time in Greece, Turkey and Italy. Then I came back, probably in '49. In '48 of course I also visited Germany. I saw Germany in ruins. I went to France. In '49 and '50 I started traveling widely in the Middle East: Iraq, Iran, Syria, places where I wouldn't dream of going today because they have become dangerous. But all of this was archaeological; I was visiting excavations.

SMITH: Regarding your initial return to Europe, up until '52 or '53, Europe was still reeling from the effects of the war. Besides the devastation, people were still living in very straitened circumstances, even in the victorious countries.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: How did that affect your sense of self-identification as a European, to see



Europe in this devastated condition?

HOFFMANN: It certainly made me identify again with the German tradition. I went back to Germany as a student. I went to the University of Tübingen as an exchange student while at Harvard on one of these year abroad arrangements, and I began feeling German. Not feeling Jewish, but feeling German. I had a German girlfriend at the time and I made friends with young German scholars, writers, intellectuals, and these friendships had an influence on me.

SMITH: Did you have a sense of self-reflection about Germany's historic role and what had happened?

HOFFMANN: None of it yet.

SMITH: None of it yet?

HOFFMANN: Not at that time, no.

SMITH: Certainly there had to have been a sense that something terrible had happened in Germany?

HOFFMANN: Certainly, certainly, but it wasn't conscious. For me this came about in a slow process, through psychoanalysis.

SMITH: But I was thinking also in terms of your friends in Tübingen. There was another interview in this series, I think it was the interview with Otto von Simson, where he told of spending a year at the University of Frankfurt in '48 or '49, a year off from [the University of] Chicago. One of the things he commented on was how the



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students there were still trying to find excuses for Hitler, to separate him from the Nazis. There was no question that Nazis were bad, but much as some Italians tried to do with Mussolini, they were saying that Hitler had been misguided by bad people who surrounded him, which convinced von Simson that he didn't want to come back to Germany quite yet.

HOFFMANN: Yes. I saw none of that in Germany, but I did see it in the United States. Harvard had hired a non-Jewish German emigrant, whose name was Thimme, to give me supplementary extra-curricular training in writing in German, because I was speaking German but I was unable to write in German. When I returned from one of my summer trips to Europe, this man, who was Jürgen Thimme's older brother, said, "Tell, me, is it true that the Jews have all the shops again on the Kurfürstendam?" and there I took note: anti-Semitism. I was shocked by it, but didn't relate it to me personally.

SMITH: So your identity as a European is strengthened—

HOFFMANN: Strengthened by my positive contacts with young Germans. There was one in Tübingen whom I became close to, who had inherited the Cotta Verlag, Goethe's publishers. I don't remember his name, but he was an interesting man. I met a young philosopher there whose name I can't recall. Also, in those early years I would visit friends of my brother's. He was a lieutenant in the American navy, as was I later, a seven years delay. He was with the Rhine River Patrol, as it was called, and

[The text on this page is extremely faint and illegible. It appears to be a list or a series of entries, possibly a table of contents or a list of references, but the specific details cannot be discerned.]

he later went into the consular service. He contacted a great many German intellectuals, and especially philosophers whom I then with letters of introduction from him, would visit. One of them was Benedetto Croce, who was at that time living in Rome. Croce then gave me a note of introduction to his friend Bernard Berenson at the Villa I Tatti in Florence.

SMITH: Of course with Berenson you had the Harvard connection.

HOFFMANN: Berenson was the Harvard connection. I recall now that the note said, "This is to introduce a nice boy from Harvard." I spent one afternoon with him. He showed me through his collections, his books, and we talked, chatted, and it is a fond recollection.

SMITH: Did you maintain any kind of connection with him, or was it just that one visit?

HOFFMANN: No, it was just that one visit.

SMITH: Was your self-identification, as a European, or as a German?

HOFFMANN: Both, I should say, because I was attracted to the French tradition via Bernard Bothmer, Dietrich's brother. Both Bothmers were anti-German, but Bernard was particularly Francophile, so I would meet Bernard in Paris. I very quickly learned French and got familiar with the French intellectual tradition.

SMITH: Did you spend much time in Paris?

HOFFMANN: I spend a lot of time in Paris in the 1950s.





SMITH: Doing work?

HOFFMANN: I would be working at the Louvre, collecting material. I had a friend who was *conservateur en chef* of Greek and Roman antiquities at that time, and that was Pierre Devambez. I would spend a lot of time with him, attributing Greek vases in the storerooms.

SMITH: Let me get back to your education. When you move into classical archaeology, attribution becomes the primary thing that you are doing?

HOFFMANN: At that time I was going along with the American trend in specialization. The idea then was to find something that somebody else hadn't already done, and specialize. My specialization by that time was plastic vases, and I was busily taking notes on all the unpublished material in all the collections. Out of that emerged the Sotades work.

SMITH: Many years later.

HOFFMANN: Actually not, because my Ph.D. dissertation at Harvard was on a Sotodean shape called the *rhyta*, these animal-headed things; it was called *Attic Red-figured Rhyta*, and it was published as a book by Philipp von Zabern, in Mainz.

SMITH: Right. What were the problems that you were posing to yourself, and how did they differ from the problems that your teachers might be concerned with?

HOFFMANN: That all comes later.

SMITH: Okay. [laughter]



HOFFMANN: I was posing *no* problems to myself, I was just describing and compiling data. I'll show you two books, you probably haven't seen them. One is called *Attic Red-Figured Rhyta* and the other is *Tarentine Rhyta*, and they pose no problems in the sense that I am interested in problems today.

SMITH: Could you reconstruct what your preliminary fields were, and who you worked with? Your field exams.

HOFFMANN: The fieldwork, you mean?

SMITH: Well, it may relate to fieldwork, but the professors you worked with who examined you in your orals.

HOFFMANN: Yes, one of them was [John Cooney], from the Brooklyn Museum; it was all connoisseurship. They produced an early dynastic Egyptian something or other from the Brooklyn Museum and showed it to me and I had to identify it and describe it—that sort of thing. I don't recall that there was terribly much emphasis, even in my Ph.D. examinations, on very wide-ranging things, like Picasso, at all.

SMITH: But you were being examined as a classicist, in any event?

HOFFMANN: No.

SMITH: Art history in general?

HOFFMANN: My Ph.D. is in art history and archaeology, and I don't believe I am telling you a lie when I say that I was not examined in Greek, in Plato, or in Sophocles. At that time I didn't have a clue, and this is something that I have had to

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laboriously develop for myself. It is a great gap there, a great mistake that was made.

SMITH: What about iconographic training; there must have been some of that?

HOFFMANN: Iconographic training, yes, and also iconology. I am glad that you mentioned it because this is something that I became interested in in the last year.

After I had done my military service in the navy, I had become curatorial assistant and assistant curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I think it was 1959 or 1960 when I started attending courses at NYU [New York University] and hearing [Erwin] Panofsky. That is where I got interested in iconography and iconology; it was like a light coming on. Panofsky was important, [Otto] Brendel was important at Columbia. Both these people were an entirely different tradition from the Fogg.

SMITH: Did you meet Panofsky?

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: So you worked with him on a more personal level?

HOFFMANN: Yes. I went to courses frequently and Panofsky was a very warm and welcoming person; he was very much at ease with his students.

SMITH: Of course, you have mentioned in other places that a problem with the iconographic tradition is that its conception of classical myth is very much based in modern conceptions.

HOFFMANN: That is Brendel. I remember hearing a brilliant lecture by Otto Brendel on Picasso and the classical tradition. Modern art was not part of my



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training. Again, it's something that I developed for myself.

SMITH: What about training in social history of the ancient world? Was there any of that?

HOFFMANN: Apart from Jaeger's course in *paideia*, which isn't really social history, there was none of it.

SMITH: Was there work being done at that time that you could connect to?

HOFFMANN: That I can connect to now?

SMITH: Yes.

HOFFMANN: I don't think so. I believe that this is something that came about in the sixties, or in the seventies in particular. At that time I did feel under an obligation to do fieldwork. Is this of interest?

SMITH: Yes, it is.

HOFFMANN: I did fieldwork in Turkey. Don't ask me when. I joined a German expedition to Pergamon, and I was profoundly bored. I did fieldwork again, because I thought, "Well, Pergamon wasn't it; that was really more of a treasure hunt than serious fieldwork. I'll try it again in Italy." I went and joined the *Soprintendente* down in the Basilicata, a man by the name of Dinu Adamesteanu, who was a friend of mine whom I had met at Gisela Richter's. I did a season's fieldwork at Melfi and at another site, and I was profoundly bored again. So by that time I realized that probably my digging has to take place elsewhere than in the soil.



SMITH: Actually, many archaeologists seem to have that response.

HOFFMANN: It's part of an American tradition, fieldwork. You are not really an archaeologist in America unless you do fieldwork. This might have changed today, but certainly in my day it was so.

SMITH: You had mentioned that one of your roommates, or one of your friends was working on pre-Socratic philosophy.

HOFFMANN: Harold Reiche, a Norwegian by extraction.

SMITH: So was this of interest to you at the time? Were you able to connect it to your thinking about Greek—

HOFFMANN: I was fascinated by Heraclitus in particular at the time, but that was quite apart from my work.

SMITH: So you were not necessarily using this to critique Plato or Sophocles?

HOFFMANN: No, this came much later. Also Empedocles I was reading at the time, but more via Goethe and Hölderlin, because in Tübingen I got interested in Hölderlin, Tübingen of course being Hölderlin's town. Again, my classicism, yes I would call it classicism at this time, was Hölderlin, Goethe, and that is something that connects up to the pre-Socratics, because Hölderlin was into the pre-Socratics.

SMITH: Well, this all points also for me to Heidegger, and I am wondering if you were part of this turn to Heidegger that happened in postwar Europe—postwar France in particular, but also in Germany.





HOFFMANN: In no way whatsoever. I discovered Heidegger here at Istine, via a friend of mine who lives just behind that hill.

SMITH: Was his name mentioned in Tübingen? Did he come up?

HOFFMANN: Heidegger wasn't mentioned. No, my interest in Heidegger is more recent and has to do with new paradigm American thinking rather than anything that I was doing then.

SMITH: Okay. Were there debates in the field at the time that were of particular interest to you?

HOFFMANN: None whatsoever. One didn't debate. One chose one's idol and followed it; in this case it was Beazley.

SMITH: Okay. It has struck me that the Anglo-American tradition in archaeology is to put it kindly, resistant to, or has been resistant to ideas.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: Very much object-oriented and more concerned about puzzles.

HOFFMANN: Yes, it's in the Anglo-Saxon, empiric tradition. You can be a European man of letters in the British empiric tradition, whereas in America it is better if you are a technologist, if you are interested in some new way of dating more precisely.

SMITH: Were you interested in this?

HOFFMANN: No.



SMITH: I think this aspect of archaeology is not typical of American higher education; it puts archaeology apart in very profound ways.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: I am wondering how you place yourself as a person who is an intellectual and interested in ideas within a mode of working that is very empiricist and technical?

HOFFMANN: I tell you, frankly, I have lost contact with that type of empirical work. In fact, a Dutch friend of mine just Xeroxed me a copy of the program of the forthcoming International Conference of Classical Archaeologists, in Amsterdam, and I was amazed that she is going to it. I could find very little that interested me in any way.

SMITH: But what about forty years ago?

HOFFMANN: Well, forty years ago I would have been there, of course.

SMITH: Of course, yes. And interested in many things.

HOFFMANN: No, I would be doing a very specialist paper on some previously unpublished object.

SMITH: Okay. And would you have been interested to hear other specialist papers on related topics?

HOFFMANN: Yes, of course, but only as long as the topics were related.

SMITH: In order to learn something, or perhaps out of fear that somebody else would have made a breakthrough that would be—



HOFFMANN: I couldn't tell you.

SMITH: Well, I guess I raise that wondering to what degree the field was and is competitive.

HOFFMANN: It was highly competitive, and I'm sure it still is. But as I say, competition doesn't interest me anymore.

SMITH: Anymore?

HOFFMANN: Of course I am going to read the reviews of my books and so on and so forth, but I have really ceased being competitive, because there is no one to compete with. I don't know anyone that is interested in the sort of work I am doing except in other fields. I don't know enough of the younger generation. Actually, yes, there are a few of the younger Scandinavian people whom I can talk to. I am sure that this is something that is changing. I just haven't caught up.

SMITH: You were saying last night [off-tape] that you were a very competitive person in the fifties. I wonder what it meant to you to be competitive and to establish yourself.

HOFFMANN: It meant publish, publish, publish. Write more and more, get things published. That was an obsession at that time.

SMITH: And publishing meant attribution, largely?

[Tape II, Side One]

SMITH: We were talking about publishing.





HOFFMANN: Yes, you scored at least as many points with a new object as with a new attribution. I noticed from these papers in Amsterdam that this is still going on today. It's like "a new so-and-so by—" and this sort of thing. So it was important at that time to know collectors and to know *soprintendente* who would show you things in the storerooms so that you could publish something that was previously unknown.

SMITH: Let's look at a few of your early articles. In '52 you publish an article on the great altar at Pergamon.

HOFFMANN: Yes, influence of Bernard Bothmer.

SMITH: In what sense?

HOFFMANN: Bernard Bothmer suggested the subject to me. It's the Egyptian influence. Bernard was curator at the Brooklyn Museum and I was actually thinking of becoming an Egyptologist at that time, through his friendship. It is a line that I haven't followed.

SMITH: Yes. And then in the same year you publish "The Architectural Antecedents of the Great Altar in Pergamon," so it's the same area.

HOFFMANN: That's getting another item in your bibliography on more or less the same data.

SMITH: Yes. In '53, "An Archaic Lion at Didyma."

HOFFMANN: Ah, now that's something different. This is Uncle Sándor coming in. It was on my travels in the year 1950 or '51, in Turkey, in the backwoods somewhere,

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that I came across some workers who were digging a ditch to put in a water conduit, and out came this archaic lion, and so I discovered it, so to speak. I was there when it came out of the ground. I took notes on it and measured it as I had been trained, as an archaeologist, and very proudly published it in *Archaeology*. This was of course the result of Hanfmann saying, "Oh, you must publish this," when I proudly showed him my photographs.

SMITH: You also published "A Bronze Fulcrum in Providence."

HOFFMANN: Yes, that's more of the same, going into the storerooms, finding something, looking at the cards and realizing, "Oh, this has never been published, and I can publish this."

SMITH: So, in this case it was going into a museum?

HOFFMANN: Yes. The Rhode Island School of Design.

SMITH: Okay. "Archaic Greek Altars," you publish in *AJA* [*American Journal of Archaeology*].

HOFFMANN: "Archaic Greek Altars" is still squeezing the lemon of the Great Altar at Pergamon. There might have been some interesting ideas in that; I don't remember, it's so long ago.

SMITH: In '58 you publish "A Fayence *Rhyton* of the Persian Period."

HOFFMANN: Bernard Bothmer, and John Cooney, the connoisseur at the Brooklyn Museum.





SMITH: So this was a piece at Brooklyn?

HOFFMANN: This was a piece which I discovered in the storeroom in the Brooklyn Museum and something clicked. Actually, it was only a lion's head, but I could see that there was a tiny little curve going up, etcetera. In a way, it's attribution scholarship, isn't it?

SMITH: Yes. Then you also publish "The Date of the Panagurische Treasure."

HOFFMANN: "The Date of the Panagurische Treasure," yes. That's pursuing a different strand, more the iconographic line, because I am putting together a great deal of material for a dating which turned out to be wrong.

SMITH: But the method was the important thing.

HOFFMANN: The method, exactly, yes.

SMITH: At the same time you do "An Etruscan *Rhyton* in Vienna."

HOFFMANN: Again, specialization and attribution. It was very thrilling, and it still is, to find things that relate to other things and to see things which others haven't seen.

SMITH: So this is the connoisseurship, of course.

HOFFMANN: It's the connoisseurship, it's also detective work, I would say, and surely ambition as well.

SMITH: Ambition. Ambition towards what goal?

HOFFMANN: Publishing.

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SMITH: But only publishing for its own sake?

HOFFMANN: Well, I am interpolating back now, but publishing, I suppose, for the sake of getting tenure at some university, eventually. This is something that certainly wouldn't have been conscious at the time, but that's what this is about, isn't it?

SMITH: But each of these small problems allows you to establish—

HOFFMANN: Establish yourself as expert in your field.

SMITH: Right. And it's based on the fact that more material has been excavated than scholars could have processed over the past two hundred years or so.

HOFFMANN: Yes, but people have been processing each in their own way, and the material keeps being reprocessed, and reprocessed, and that's what it's there for. I don't believe that describing and dating is really processing.

SMITH: Okay. What is it then?

HOFFMANN: What is it? Well, it's empiricism, it's what Ken Wilber calls flatlands, meaning very low level.

SMITH: Yes, but it was the activity that one engaged in to become an authority in the field. So this whole period you are making connections with dealers and collectors and museum people on both sides of the Atlantic?

HOFFMANN: Yes, making myself more of a museum person than a university person.

SMITH: So you were thinking of a museum career?



HOFFMANN: It had been shaping up in that direction.

SMITH: Now, you start at the Fogg, I guess.

HOFFMANN: I started at the Fogg. I did get some museum training there of course, as I recall now. It was taken up again during my period in Rome as a Prix de Rome scholar at the American Academy, where I met and became close to Gisela Richter, who had been at the Metropolitan Museum for something like fifty years. She was at that time in retirement and I was a good friend of hers. We had frequent walks together and I was there for tea almost every other day. She has a phenomenal bibliography, and it's all recording material. I am not putting Gisela down, I loved her, and in all fairness to her, she did have some ideas as well, especially about Greeks and Etruscans and about the relationship between them. But her primary concern was always getting out another book, on this, on that, on furniture, on bronzes, on kouroi, which to a scholar means getting your name in print as the expert, putting your stamp on the kouroi, putting your stamp on this field, on that field—covering it.

SMITH: When you say you became good friends with her, what do you mean by that? I guess there was a significant difference in age. Was it more a formal kind of friendship?

HOFFMANN: Yes, it was intellectual companionship. Gisela would give a tea every Tuesday, at her home, where she would invite people. There would be visiting archaeologists, or people from the university, *Soprintendente*, and so on. I met





practically all of the Italian archaeologists and museum people at Gisela Richter's at one time or another. It was there that I met the man whom she wanted me to meet, who would be very instrumental in shaping my life, namely James Rorimer, who hired me to come to the Metropolitan Museum. So this was Gisela Richter's scheme, she wanted me to be there. Perhaps to make trouble. [laughter]

SMITH: So she was your patron?

HOFFMANN: She was my patroness.

SMITH: And the meeting with the various *soprintendente* would open up storerooms for you?

HOFFMANN: Yes, certainly. The meeting with Dinu, for instance, opened up excavating in south Italy. I can't remember the name of the man who was *soprintendente* in Florence at that time, it may have been Ducati. But at that time it wasn't difficult to get storerooms open if you were an American, because they all hoped for some kind of privilege or connection.

SMITH: I see. There is a folkloric tradition about the arbitrariness of Italian archives and storerooms; you never know if you are going to be allowed to look at something or not.

HOFFMANN: Exactly. In that connection I remember a man by the name of Gervasio, an ancient man, the *Soprintendente* of Bari, and he used to take the key to everything home with him; it took me three trips down to Bari to finally find this man



to be able to look at the material in the storerooms.

SMITH: This is just a question of being persistent.

HOFFMANN: Yes. "Dedicated" is the word.

SMITH: Dedicated. Did you have to prove your dedication? Was this a test, to prove that you were a serious person?

HOFFMANN: Certainly if you got past Gervasio it meant you were really an archaeologist; you had seen the storerooms in Bari, where very few people had penetrated. The same was true at Naples at the time. Things in Naples that were covered by literally inches of dust would emerge in exchange for cigarettes. In fact, this went on for many years. I recall that there are things in my book on Greek *rhyta* which have since then disappeared out of the museum. Disappeared. So they are known only through my publication.

SMITH: Disappeared into the black market?

HOFFMANN: Sure. I remember traveling with A. D. Trendall, the south Italian man, during the fifties. We visited one collection in Santa Maria di Capua Vetere, a private collection. We would record and describe the vases, and on a subsequent visit, I remember, maybe a year or two later, I saw marks where certain vases had gotten stuck to the shelf and been pried off, but the vases themselves were no longer there. Here is where this attribution scholarship and this kind of sleuthing scholarship, let's call it Dietrich scholarship, can be very important, because it has

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been on a number of occasions possible to trace vases published by Trendall or others when they come up in sales.

SMITH: I see, yes.

HOFFMANN: Yes, to get them back to where they belong.

SMITH: And what about collectors? Did Richter introduce you to private collectors? She must have known people everywhere.

HOFFMANN: Not in Italy. Meeting collectors is something that happened during my stay in New York, with Dietrich. For instance, one man that I remember whom I became close to was Norbert Schimmel—the Norbert Schimmel Collection. I met Norbert and Evelyn on a weekend, by chance, at an exhibition of paintings at the Metropolitan Museum. I saw these two interesting looking people who seemed to me to be European. I started talking to them, and a friendship developed. Norbert Schimmel came to have one of the great American collections. It has I believe gone mostly to the Metropolitan Museum. I did a catalog of his collection, which was another feather in the scholarly cap. And then Dietrich did a new edition of it, much bigger.

SMITH: But this is again to present to the scholarly public what is otherwise hidden away in someone's closet?

HOFFMANN: Quite.

SMITH: Now, when you talk about putting your stamp on something, the method

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1880

seems to be individual but not very personal.

HOFFMANN: Yes, when I used the word "stamp," I was thinking of the German word, *Stempel*; it's what animals do to mark off their territory, in that sense, yes.

SMITH: Oh, okay, yes. The English *spoor*.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: So that as a scholar you claim a certain set of materials as yours?

HOFFMANN: Yes, then other people don't touch it; in fact, they send you photographs. That's how it works.

SMITH: You said that Richter wanted you to go to the Metropolitan, but did she share other things with you about where she wanted the field to go, or where she saw museums going? What were her concerns as you all sat around and talked?

HOFFMANN: She had none. No, Richter would take out a set of photographs and show them around, and she would say, "Now, I am going to pick your brains." Her concerns were always with presenting something that she had seen somewhere that fascinated her, and publishing more and more material. Then she would collect everybody's ideas. She was fabulous at that. The first question would be, Is it genuine? The second question would be, What is it? What was it used for? And the third would be dating—what school is it, Aphrodisias, or something else?

SMITH: Now, What is it used for? implies a whole understanding of a social milieu from which it emerged.



HOFFMANN: Theoretically, but that's generally left for other fields. It's like leaving religion to the theologists.

SMITH: So to identify something as a funerary object doesn't require you to understand the religious context?

HOFFMANN: No, funerary object is enough. Funerary in particular is something you don't want to get involved with because it may cost you your reputation.

SMITH: So this would lead to accusations inclining to speculation?

HOFFMANN: Yes, or of having a "funerary theory," and this is something that has been plaguing me for decades, really. People either connect me with somebody else's theory on metalware, or with a "funerary theory." I don't have a funerary theory, but that is a niche that anything having to do with what is not tangible fits into.

SMITH: I am trying to get a sense of the degree to which ideas or interpretive schemes would be bandied about or locked down?

HOFFMANN: No, it was one scheme only, a monoscheme. It's the Anglo-Saxon monoscheme, as different even from the German monoscheme. The German monoscheme would want to maybe find a lost play by Sophocles.

SMITH: Yes, I can imagine plenty of American scholars who would want to find a lost play by Sophocles, only they would be in the literature department.

HOFFMANN: They would be in a different field. Exactly. It would be the classics department, not really archaeologists.



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SMITH: At Harvard, did you have much connection with the classics department?

HOFFMANN: The only connection I had was with Sterling Dow at the time, who was a very single-minded epigrapher.

SMITH: And of course epigraphy is important for—

HOFFMANN: Epigraphy didn't interest me at that time. I was using Sterling for learning Greek. I never attended his courses.

SMITH: Did you get to know Beazley?

HOFFMANN: I did indeed get to know Beazley, yes. Do you want to hear about it now?

SMITH: Yes.

HOFFMANN: I will tell you about my first visit to Beazley. Let me see, was it with Dietrich? No, it was without Dietrich, but Dietrich had arranged it, and I remember Lady Beazley's bees flying in and out of the open window. She had certain eccentricities, like keeping bees in the apartment. The conversation was polite and general, about my work in the Metropolitan Museum, about Beazley's work on Attic red vases. My last visit with Beazley was when I was in Hamburg, and I went there after he had had his stroke to see if he could attribute a new acquisition of mine, which I was unable to attribute, and he looked at it, and said, "Yes, Ha . . . , Ha . . . , Hasselmann Painter." That was shortly before he died.

SMITH: And, again, it was just a question of looking.



HOFFMANN: Looking and knowing. Of course having heard it, then I looked and compared, and obviously I should have seen it all along.

SMITH: In that case it's brush stroke and the stylistic forms?

HOFFMANN: For that you should go back and read Beazley's *Berlin Painter*. He does explain it; it's graphology, really, how the Berlin Painter does the collarbone. Gisela Richter applied this to the attribution of kouroi, how the collarbone looks and so on, and she has evolved a dating scheme very much along the Beazley lines. In this connection I should mention that a close and dear friend of mine, who is and was Beazley's successor at Oxford, Martin Robertson, also continues in the Beazley tradition, but he is open to iconography and even iconology. I shouldn't say that Beazley was closed to iconography, certainly, he couldn't have been. But he chose not to go into it in his writings, because he couldn't; he only had one lifetime.

SMITH: Before we go into the Metropolitan, were you also meeting German scholars at this time? So far you have been staying in the Anglo-American world and the Italian.

HOFFMANN: Yes, I met Erika Simon, who is very well known and has done a great deal of good and important work. Also [Roland] Hampe, and others I can't recall.

SMITH: I wonder what happens when the monoschemes come together? Is there some kind of interesting exchange?

HOFFMANN: It's shoptalk when the monoschemes come together.

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FOR THE YEAR 1907  
CONTAINING  
A SUMMARY OF THE  
WORK OF THE BUREAU  
DURING THE YEAR  
AND A LIST OF THE  
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SMITH: That's all?

HOFFMANN: Yes. I mean, a monoschemist will contribute a footnote to the other monoschemist's work, and will be of course acknowledged.

SMITH: So it's not simply national monoschemes.

HOFFMANN: No, no. It's an absolutely international club, the attribution club, yes. There are no French people at it that I know because the French have always been interested in ideas. But it's English, American, Australian, and German, now, in recent years. It has become German because the Germans orient themselves to America, what will get them invited there, and so on.

SMITH: In this particular field?

HOFFMANN: In this particular field, which is all I know about.

SMITH: In '59 you file your dissertation.

HOFFMANN: In '59 I have done my military service, I have done the American Academy in Rome, I have done a year at the Metropolitan Museum and filed my dissertation. I'll tell you now what happened in '59—how I got to Europe.

SMITH: Well, I actually wanted to get to the Metropolitan.

HOFFMANN: I thought I have already been there.

SMITH: We haven't really talked about it too much.

HOFFMANN: Make a little note please, "Eric Berganos."

SMITH: Eric Berganos.

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HOFFMANN: Yes, okay, go on.

SMITH: On a personal note, I notice from your '75 curriculum vitae that you have a twenty-year-old daughter [Andrea], so I deduce from that that she must have been born in '54 or '55?

HOFFMANN: I married in '54, and she was born in '56. I had a difficult marriage, which caused a lot of trouble at the Metropolitan Museum. I had married a fashion model, in opposition to my father, and to make things worse she was Jewish. It just didn't work; it was obvious after the first year. So, in the second year, we were living together in New York, both thinking about how to get out of this. Me thinking with the least damage, and she thinking with the most money. She would storm into trustees' meetings at the Metropolitan Museum saying, "How can you hire a man like this? He is such a terrible man!" And through a friend of hers she got a story in some tabloid, with the headline "Curator Loves Rome More than Home." [laughter] All this was making my life difficult. Do you want to hear more about this?

SMITH: Yes, why not?

HOFFMANN: Well, it was one reason for my leaving the United States. The other one was of course Dietrich von Bothmer, who initially was a friend of mine. I still think of him as a friend, but there was so much personality conflict that I realized there was no future there and I submitted my resignation after six months. I was persuaded to at least stay out the year. And then comes in Eric Berganos. That



summer I was in Greece. "Curator Loves Athens more than Home," it should have been. [laughter] I was in Greece, and flying to Brindisi I happened to sit next to a young German whom I found *sympathique*, and we talked. In the course of that one-hour flight, he told me that he was from Hamburg, his name was Eric Berganos. He knew the minister of culture personally, and he said, "Look, I want you to come to Hamburg, you can have this job." It was the job which Jürgen Thimme, who then went on to Karlsruhe, had held, and Berta Segall, who went on to Basel. It was open, and they were looking for somebody, and he said, "May I put in your name?" I said, "Yes, of course." Within weeks the minister of culture from Hamburg was in New York. Not for Herbert Hoffmann; he happened to be there on other business, but I got a call and we had lunch and he hired me, like that. So I resigned my job at the Metropolitan.

SMITH: It sounds like your period at the Metropolitan was hell in every way.

HOFFMANN: It was a difficult year, yes, because in addition to the usual museum intrigues, the then director of the museum who had hired me, James Rorimer, seemed to have—I can talk about it because the man is dead now—a personal interest in pitting Dietrich and I against each other. He would invite me to breakfast, which was a special honor, and not invite Dietrich. And at breakfast he would tell me, "Don't listen to Dietrich, he doesn't know a thing, and he doesn't have any taste, and he is so German. You do the vitrine." So, I would go back to Dietrich and say, "The director



[The text on this page is extremely faint and illegible. It appears to be a list or a series of entries, possibly a table of contents or a list of references, but the specific details cannot be discerned.]

wants me to do the vitrine," which was bound to lead to trouble, and it did.

SMITH: And he was ostensibly your supervisor?

HOFFMANN: The curator at the time was a charming old lady who was more or less finished with it, Christine Alexander, and Dietrich was in effect doing everything in the department.

SMITH: There was a competition between the two of you for succeeding Miss Alexander as curator?

HOFFMANN: No, no I never thought of it that way. No, maybe competition isn't even the right word; it was rivalry. As simple as that. I will give you an anecdote. While installing one of these vitrines, I said, "I think that looks very good." And Dietrich said, "*Vell*, Herbert. *Vell*." Then I said, "No, it's *good*." And he said, "No, it's *vell*!" Finally we said, "We'll write to Beazley!" Beazley unfortunately replied that *good* was the proper Oxford English usage. So the letter came back from Beazley proving me right, which only made things worse. [laughter] It was that kind of thing. So, have we finished on the Metropolitan?

SMITH: You did spend only a year there.

HOFFMANN: I had very good times with Dietrich as well, because he would run hot and cold in his relationship with me, as I would certainly with regard to him. One thing I did learn from him, as from no other person before, was how to distinguish a fake from an original. I remember we would spend evenings after closing time with a



terracotta that I had or that he had brought up from the storerooms, and we would apply various tests to it, and then in the end leave it overnight soaking in water in which Dietrich had put calgon, and we would come back eagerly in the morning to see whether it was still there or not. I learned a great deal from him that has been very valuable to me, particularly in Hamburg in my role as independent curator having to decide whether to buy or not buy.

SMITH: You had also worked at the Boston Museum.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: This was previously?

HOFFMANN: No. This gets complicated now. I would like to slur over this in order not to confuse people, but since you ask me: I got the job in Hamburg, stayed there for three years, and then my old friend Cornelius [Vermeule] started wooing me as co-curator, and I started being tempted to come back. After all, I had done it all at Hamburg, and that place was too small for me, so I resigned after three years and went to Boston with the idea of being Cornelius's co-curator, which was the way he put it to me verbally, but actually the position that I held there was Assistant Curator and it was clear from the beginning that—

SMITH: He would be boss.

HOFFMANN: He would be boss, yes. But we have to save that for later.

SMITH: Going back to the Metropolitan, you had indicated last night that you had a





deeper knowledge of the dealers and the collectors than Dietrich.

HOFFMANN: Let's put it this way: I was more interested, due to my training by George Hanfmann, in going out and looking. There was a lot in New York at the time, and Dietrich had his one or two suppliers, as had Gisela, as had Christine Alexander, and he was not really interested in that. Perfectly reasonable, because they would bring him very good material. So I would go around the corner to the [Mathias] Komar Gallery and I might recognize a little bronze as something that had been published in the early nineteenth century in [O. M.] Stackelberg's *Die Gräber der Hellenen*. I would bring it back and say, "Dietrich, we have to buy this, because it's been published in *Die Gräber der Hellenen*," and Dietrich would be annoyed because he hadn't spotted it himself and it had been in the window for weeks. And Christine would say, "Herbert, won't a photograph do?" [laughter] So that was the situation there, to answer your question.

SMITH: "Won't a photograph do?" Why would she say that?

HOFFMANN: Well, a photograph probably would have done, because it wasn't a particularly high quality piece; it was a piece which Stackelberg had already published.

SMITH: Oh, I see. But on this question of museum work and quality: for the museum curator, the quality may be more important than other issues?

HOFFMANN: Yes.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BY JAMES M. SMITH, LL.D., OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

IN TEN VOLUMES. VOL. I.

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SMITH: Was that important for you, in your own work at Hamburg? How did you relate to this issue of quality?

HOFFMANN: Exactly the same way. I wanted the best pieces. John Cooney, from the Brooklyn Museum, was by that time a close friend of mine, and he was Mr. Connoisseurship in America in those years. He staged an exhibition called *Collector's Choice* at the Brooklyn Museum, and he was also a close friend of Norbert Schimmel, and so there was this common interest in quality.

SMITH: How had you gotten to know John Cooney?

HOFFMANN: Cooney I got to know through Bernard Bothmer at the museum, because Cooney had originally been curator of Egyptian art when Bernard was co-curator, and I was assistant curator and then he moved up when Cooney retired. Next question.

SMITH: How did you get to know Bernard?

HOFFMANN: Bernard I got to know in my student days at Harvard.

SMITH: But he was already—

HOFFMANN: No, Bernard at that time was Assistant Curator, and the Curator of Egyptian Art, William Sungleton Smith, was a very nice man. But I was going into the department, visiting Bernard, looking at objects, and it was at that time that I thought possibly of becoming an Egyptologist.

SMITH: Okay. To what degree are the methods and the priorities in the work, and



perhaps in your own work in particular, shaped by the role of museums and by the priorities of museums in relation to this body of objects?

HOFFMANN: Today, or previously?

SMITH: Well, then, previously.

[Tape II, Side Two]

SMITH: I was asking about the degree to which your methodology was shaped by thinking of exhibitions rather than publications. Of course, publication is important, but perhaps exhibition is its own value?

HOFFMANN: No, I always thought more of publication than of exhibition. I started thinking more in terms of exhibition when I got to Hamburg. It was in the sixties when I started meeting people who thought politically, and I myself became political, and we wanted to open the museum to the public. The director at that time, a man by the name of Professor Meyer, said, *Liebe Herr Doktor Hoffmann, bitte, halten Sie mir das Publikum vom Hals*, which means in English, "My dear Dr. Hoffmann, Please keep the public off my neck." He didn't want the public. He called it *Mein Institut*, not *Mein Museum*. His institute. I remember at the time, I wanted to put in a revolving door, and he said absolutely no. Now there is a revolving door, but he had to retire before they got it.

SMITH: What kind of museum was this?

HOFFMANN: The Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe. There are two museums in



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DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

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Hamburg, one is the Kunsthalle, and the other is the Kunst und Gewerbe. The one collects paintings, and the other one everything else. So ancient art, classical art, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Etruscan and so on, is all at Kunst und Gewerbe. Also, very fine art nouveau, baroque, and everything else. It's a division that doesn't exist in America. It's like the Victoria and Albert Museum—that kind of museum.

SMITH: And is it attached to the university?

HOFFMANN: Only indirectly, inasmuch as in the succession of the absolutist state, everything is somehow in Germany "State," so the museum is state, and the university is state, and if you become a curator at the museum you automatically have the title of a professor at the university. In my case, I did one thing extra, I did what is called the *Habilitation*, which means you either write a special thesis or you submit your publications to the faculty and I submitted my publications and was *habilitiert*. I don't even know how to translate it.

SMITH: No, there is no translation.

HOFFMANN: You get the *venia legendi*, and you are entitled to teach at the university, to lecture. They don't have to pay you, but you have to lecture for them.

SMITH: Once you are *habilitiert*?

HOFFMANN: Once you are *habilitiert*, yes, they can call on you to lecture. But this somehow was important for me.

SMITH: And this also establishes your credentials within the university system?

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

PHYSICS 311

LECTURE 1

MECHANICS

1.1. Kinematics

1.2. Dynamics

1.3. Energy

1.4. Momentum

1.5. Rotational Motion

1.6. Oscillations

1.7. Waves

1.8. Relativity

1.9. Quantum Mechanics

1.10. Modern Physics

1.11. Astrophysics

1.12. Cosmology

1.13. Particle Physics

1.14. Nuclear Physics

1.15. Biophysics

1.16. Environmental Physics

1.17. Earth and Planetary Science

1.18. Interdisciplinary Research

1.19. Outreach and Education

1.20. Miscellaneous

HOFFMANN: Yes, it means that you can become professor at any other university.

But at that time you had to have the *venia*.

SMITH: You didn't need this to be a curator, but it would certainly make you more influential?

HOFFMANN: Curators in the United States were considered more socially up, what's the word I am looking for, more, in terms of social hierarchy.

SMITH: Status.

HOFFMANN: Status, yes. Higher status, whereas in Germany they are lower status.

SMITH: Oh, within the academic hierarchy.

HOFFMANN: Yes, you have to be an academic, and you are not really an academic if you are just a museum curator.

SMITH: Were you aware, when you arrived in Germany, that your status as a curator would not be equal to what it was in the U.S?

HOFFMANN: I always felt pretty good about myself, and I didn't worry so much about status. But I got disenchanted with museums and museuming, quite generally, and I saw that that had come to an end. And the sixties, student revolution, just as a key word, came in at that point. Do you want to go into that now?

SMITH: Since you have brought it up, why not?

HOFFMANN: This was a time when politically conscious people were boycotting nuclear sites, and I started participating in marches, and one famous one which I





remember going to was Brockdorf.

SMITH: For nuclear disarmament?

HOFFMANN: Nuclear disarmament and preventing new nuclear plants being built.

In Brockdorf the police were particularly savage and there were a lot of casualties, and one way or another I got close to students at that time. I don't know how this came about, but I started having younger companions, other than those of my brother's generation, and one of them who was important at that time was Thomas Sello, a son of the art critic of *Die Zeit*, the weekly newspaper in Hamburg. Thomas Sello was organizing art teachers to teach pupils another way of looking at art, a more socially-oriented way, the sort of thing that John Berger was doing in England, the BBC program called *Ways of Seeing*. In fact, I remember Sello giving me that little book by John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, and suddenly feeling, "Well, this is much more interesting." So, slowly, slowly, I got more and more into an outsider position within the museum because I was interested in opening it up to the public. I did an exhibition called *Griechische Spiele*, or Greek Games, in 19 . . . when were the Olympics in Tokyo? Was this 1972?

SMITH: Seventy-two was Munich.

HOFFMANN: It was when the Olympics came to Munich that I wanted to concurrently put on a sports exhibition using Hamburg's collection of ancient art. But they didn't like the way I wanted to use it very much in the museum. Slavery, for



example, was a key word in this exhibition, also the non-role of women, and I involved students, not only of the university but of the art academy in this exhibition, and we did really terribly creative things.

It was a fantastic time, but it was something which was seen with horror by the other people in the museum. There was the curator of Chinese art, Rose Hempel her name was, who with a trembling voice at the staff meeting said to me, "You are as red as your sweater!" [laughter] I had the freedom to do this only because the person I had been working with for ten years or so had retired, and I had been instrumental in choosing the new director. He was a German in America.

SMITH: Who had gone to America?

HOFFMANN: Who had gone to America. Again, a friend of Bernard's and mine. He had gone to Brooklyn, and he had from there gone on to the Corning Museum of Glass. His name is Axel von Saldern, and he's still a dear friend of mine. He became the director, and I felt, now at last I could do what I pleased. I got into trouble with Axel as well over this exhibition, which probably went too far. We dethroned Athena, so to speak, literally. We put our beautiful statue of Athena flat on her back, to show that women were . . . etcetera. Yes. [laughter] Of course, Axel being Axel, a very easygoing person, let me go on with it, but I could see he was getting more and more nervous because, for example, we put a huge publicity poster in the central railway station, with our museum's statue of Zeus in silhouette, which the art students did,



with a speech bubble—

SMITH: A balloon.

HOFFMANN: A cartoon balloon coming out of his mouth saying, "Im Museum ist geheizt"—In the museum it's heated—in this unheated railway station, so we'd naturally get the bums coming into the museum, and this wasn't seen as a very gracious thing to do. But we involved a lot of people that had never been in a museum before. We put up what is called a Chinese newspaper, where visitors were encouraged to write their impressions, and these impressions were not what one might think. They were not the usual scrawls and graffiti, these were very intelligent things which we published in the end in a journal of education. We did a complete analysis.

I got involved, to make a long story short, with the Marxist students. We were reading *Das Kapital* in the evenings and were thinking how we could use an exhibition to change the world. This did open my mind, and reading *Kapital* also gave me a new look, for example, at the art market and what art meant. There was one man at the art academy in Hamburg, Bazon Brock, who was a really brilliant theoretician. He still writes for *Die Zeit*. He was providing critical Marxist theory for analyzing works of art. And Werner Hofmann, who was at the Kunsthalle, was also influential. Hofmann is a social historian of art, another connection to Warburg there via him. So, slowly, my perspective on art changed and became social.





SMITH: Now, by "Marxist" do you mean you were a Marxist humanist, or were you attracted by what was happening in the DDR?

HOFFMANN: No, certainly we had no idea of what was happening in the DDR. The DDR was a rather ideal place, like Albania, and Mao's China. We were reading Mao, but of course no one had an inkling of what the reality in those countries was at the time.

SMITH: But the Marx that was important for you was the Marx of—.

HOFFMANN: The Karl Marx of *Das Kapital*.

SMITH: The 1844 manuscripts?

HOFFMANN: The manuscripts, *The [Communist] Manifesto*, and of course Engels's work on the origin of the family. All of that also gave me the nucleus of an anthropological perspective, perhaps more Engels than Marx.

SMITH: Yes. Though that's a very nineteenth-century ethnography.

HOFFMANN: Yes, of course, but it's an entrance. So that exhibition had the great misfortune of being the second most popular exhibition that the museum had done in its entire history. I think only Oskar Kokoschka had brought more people into the museum. On the one hand Axel was very happy, and on the other he was not very happy. By this time, really, the museum life had run out for me and I was looking for a way out, and I decided that the time had come to resign. That's another chapter.

SMITH: Yes. I thought we could continue with some of your publications. After



you move to Germany, you produce things like "King Rusa's Candelabrum

[Rediscovered and Restored]" and "Two Deer-heads from Apulia."

HOFFMANN: Yes. I will take the second one first. The "Deer-heads from Apulia" I discovered in the basement of the Metropolitan Museum. I found that this thing wasn't mold made, but it actually showed clearly traces of being modeled by hand, and it turned out to be the only patrix in existence for making *rhyta*. So this was something to be rightfully proud of, and Dietrich's training had enabled me to spot this.

The other thing, the candelabrum, was in the basement in Hamburg. When I got to Hamburg, as a good American I wanted to sweep out the place and open all the boxes and really tidy up the mess that had been made by the war. Many things were still packed. One of the things I discovered was a huge wooden crate, which wasn't labeled; nobody knew what was in it. We opened it, it was packing material, and out came a heavily corroded bronze; it looked like pieces of pipe. There was also some kind of a dish that was part of this. We took it all up to the conservator, who cleaned off the corrosion and out came inscriptions in cuneiform, saying, "This is the property of Rusa, the king of the Urartians." So that was a great discovery. I still don't know how it got there in the first place, but this was brought in by the *London Illustrated News* as a great sensation, and it's still one of the top pieces of the museum. This had somehow in the thirties been deposited there and forgotten after





being excavated in Toprak-Kale, Turkish Armenia , by [Karl] Lehmann-Haupt.

SMITH: So your publication continues in the vein of putting forward new documents.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: So, "Some Unpublished Boeotian Satyr Terracottas" would be the same thing?

HOFFMANN: The same thing, yes. In fact, if someone shows me something new and unpublished it still excites me today. It doesn't happen much these days.

SMITH: And you are publishing books on *rhyta* which are of a similar nature, of presenting, cataloging—

HOFFMANN: Yes, it made me the expert on this particular shape. In fact, long after I had ceased being interested in shapes as shapes I was introduced at the J. Paul Getty Museum to the public as "Professor Hoffmann, from Germany, the expert on *rhyta* and Greek jewelry," which made me rather sour.

SMITH: You were also in charge of Egyptian and Near-Eastern art?

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: In terms of your own work, were you expanding in that area?

HOFFMANN: I expanded in that area thanks to my friendship with Norbert Schimmel, who gave two or three important Egyptian pieces to the museum, out of friendship, I should say, but I was going to say in return for my having advised him



for years. I also purchased some Near-Eastern pieces which were coming onto the market at the time. I was buying in three fields.

SMITH: Were the dealers and collectors significantly different in those areas?

HOFFMANN: The situation in Germany is not the same as in America, where, if collectors give a piece they can claim a tax deduction. I didn't get much from collectors and Norbert never got an American tax deduction for things he contributed to my museum. So there wasn't much in the way of collectors. There was one collector whom I met, who came to one of my Sunday guided tours, a man called [Walter] Kropatscheck, a physician from Helgoland. Dr. Kropatscheck had a fine collection, which he had over the years formed for himself, and I encouraged him and developed a friendship with him, and after I left Hamburg, my successor, whose name is Wilhelm Hornbostel, brought out an important catalog of the Kropatscheck collection called, *Aus den Gräben der Hellenen*. We also brought Norbert Schimmel's collection to Hamburg before it was dispersed.

SMITH: When you present that, with your increasingly social conception of history—

HOFFMANN: That was very borderline. My friends wondered what I was doing. So, as Goethe says, there were two souls within my breast.

SMITH: And of course I am wondering how the new soul is beginning to manifest itself in terms of your writing: whether an article like "Orpheus unter den Thrakern"

[The text in this block is extremely faint and illegible. It appears to be a multi-paragraph document with several lines of text per paragraph. The content is not discernible.]

is the new soul or the old soul?

HOFFMANN: It's betwixt and between, I would say. And it's also the developing interest in the metaphysical, which was always there, and which I mentioned in connection with my Harvard bachelor's thesis.

SMITH: What about an article like "Hahnenkampf in Athen [: Zur Ikonologie einer attischen Bildformel]"?

HOFFMANN: "Hahnenkampf in Athen" is my first theoretical article. It's 1974, I believe. It's the direct influence—the word *kampf* says it already—of this political battle, but it is also a result of my contact with my French intellectual friends. At this time I had already been to Paris. I was invited to Paris for a term at the Centre comparé sur les sociétés anciennes. I met people like J.-P. Vernant, [Pierre] Vidal-Naquet, Alain Schnapp, and François Lissarrague—this is all in the preface to *Sotades*. Just very briefly: they were preparing this socially-oriented show of Greek vases called *La Cité des images*, and it was at exactly that time that I got into contact with French structuralism, and these personal friendships were developing between Lissarrague and Vernant and Schnapp and myself.

At that time the periodical *Hephaistos*, of which I am an editor, was just beginning. We started inviting these people to Hamburg and we contributed articles, and we would call ourselves the "Structuralist Team." None of us likes to hear it anymore: *l'équipe structuraliste*. And that article is the expression of that new





interest in method. I should go on to say in all fairness that the discipline and organization of "Hahnenkampf in Athen" is due to my present wife, [Ursula Corleis], whom I met at this time. She was one of the students, and she was studying to be an art teacher, which she later became. I got her into our sports exhibition as a consultant. Actually, my interests were rather devious, because I was very interested in her. I was writing "Hahnenkampf" at the time, and there is as much of her thinking in it as there is of mine. It's a really teamwork. Ursula has a very clear, disciplined mind and my own is rather chaotic. You will meet her in just a moment.

SMITH: I will want to talk more about structuralism, but I think I will wait on that.

HOFFMANN: How do you feel about lunch?

SMITH: We could go on a few more minutes. You had mentioned earlier that Europe was the turning point.

HOFFMANN: Europe was the turning point, yes.

SMITH: But this is a very long period, and the experiment with returning to Boston seems a momentary falling back, a declension into the American way.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: But then your thinking about what the profession should be or could be takes a long time.

HOFFMANN: It takes a long time. Actually, my whole scholarly career as expressed in my publications very much mirrors my whole formation, which has taken a long

[The text in this block is extremely blurry and illegible. It appears to be a list or a series of paragraphs, but no specific content can be discerned.]

time, and it also mirrors my erratic character. I have gone from this to that, and quit this to do that, it's been a lot of one or the other, but in the end these various directions have all come together. The period in England was probably the most important, but we had better save that for after lunch.

SMITH: But the monoscheme is—

HOFFMANN: Starting to crumble.

SMITH: Crumble, but the monoscheme of your personal life had already blossomed into a field.

HOFFMANN: That still happened in Hamburg. I can tell you briefly: at that time there were too many women in my life, and it was causing real difficulties. One of my two intimate girlfriends said, "I think you need the help of a psychoanalyst." I grabbed onto this like a lasso, and I said, "Do you know one?" She said, "Yes, I am seeing one myself." So I started seeing a student of Anna Freud, who got me to look back at myself. In fact, she was totally focused on dreams, and I would start recalling dreams and telling her and she would write them down, and the thing that was very important to her right from the beginning was that I shouldn't make any changes in my life for the time being. This was going to take a couple of years, two or three years, and she said, "Don't make any changes." I was having trouble with her after six months, but after a year I felt sufficiently strengthened by this inward look to drop psychoanalysis, detach myself from both women, and resign my job at the museum.





So I was—*Vogelfrei* is the word in German—free as a bird for the first time in my life.

SMITH: So this was '74.

HOFFMANN: This would be now, actually, '73. I resigned in '73, I believe. I went to England in '74, yes.

SMITH: So the psychoanalysis also comes late, in a sense?

HOFFMANN: It comes at a very fertile period. Sometimes, if people are lucky, their lives start crumbling. [laughter] In fact, Jung said that neurosis is a gift from the gods for that reason—it gets people to start looking inward.

SMITH: So your psychotherapeutic training comes later?

HOFFMANN: It comes after that. It started in England. We'll come to that.

SMITH: But the combination of Marxism, psychoanalysis, and mysticism does not, on the surface, seem to be—

HOFFMANN: It's all very traditional, isn't it? You've heard the song before.

SMITH: Well, but the effort to hold them together of course requires a lot of energy.

HOFFMANN: It never came about as an effort, it just happened on its own, and didn't really require energy. It's really something that just happened. I will talk more about that. Because as the years went on I discovered that you can do more with less energy.

SMITH: Were you also reading myths at this time? Were you beginning to do



mythological studies?

HOFFMANN: I started reading myth. . . . I think you had better ask me that again when we get to England; it has to do with my diploma. It started in Oxford.

SMITH: Of course, I think at this time, already, Walter Burkert is publishing, and the literature on Greek religion is changing. Is this something that's of interest to you in Hamburg?

HOFFMANN: Yes, this came about, again, during and after England. You will see Walter Burkert mentioned in all my publications because he has supplanted Beazley. I couldn't do anything without Walter Burkert, because he has written so profusely on every aspect of cult and myth in Greece, and yet my approach is totally different from his.

SMITH: But, again, this is post-rupture?

HOFFMANN: Yes. But, really, in terms of usefulness to me today, he is equivalent to Beazley.

SMITH: You had mentioned last night that you had met Ernst Buschor, which must have been in the fifties. He died in '61, as I recall.

HOFFMANN: I visited him in Munich; it was like a pilgrimage, visiting the great man. I mustn't forget: I made another pilgrimage in Paris. I made a pilgrimage to [Claude] Lévi-Strauss, but that's just to keep it on the record. But, Buschor, and Ludwig Curtius, it was clear to me at the time, represented relics of the past.



SMITH: Did you attend any of Buschor's lectures? Or were these social visits?

HOFFMANN: Frankly, I can't remember.

SMITH: I have this image of him as a very mystical sort, so the monoscheme would seem not to work with him.

HOFFMANN: He would talk in Steinerian terms. He would use a different language, a language which owed more to Rudolf Steiner and to Stefan George than it did to English empiricism.

SMITH: Well, yes.

HOFFMANN: I think that Buschor was instrumental for the German tradition.

Buschor I can still read; Curtius I can't. I have to laugh when Curtius becomes lyrical. It's a thing of the past. It seems slightly kitsch, reading it today. Whereas Buschor has depth.

SMITH: Which today is still meaningful.

HOFFMANN: For me, yes. I would still defend Buschor. I don't know if he was a Nazi or not.

SMITH: Yes. As I recall, Buschor was an enthusiast for a while.

HOFFMANN: Now that I mention it, I remember a scholar by the name of Peter Kahane, from the Israel Museum, coming to Hamburg. We were collaborating on a show, and— No, I am sorry. I am not talking about Buschor now, I am talking about [Ulf] Jantzen, who was Buschor's student and a professor at Hamburg at the





time. [Kahane] was saying, "I don't see how you can be friends with this man; I'll never forget his stormtrooper's boots." This is Ulf Jantzen. Ah, it's difficult.

SMITH: At this time was he completely reformed?

HOFFMANN: It's something we never talked about. No, Jantzen never completely reformed, but, again, that's past history. I wasn't aware of him as a Nazi.

SMITH: Was there a romantic attachment to the German spirit?

HOFFMANN: Definitely.

SMITH: For you?

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: So this is part of what has drawn you back. But you didn't go back to Austria, which is where your family was.

HOFFMANN: I have in fact gone back to Austria. I have gone back to Eisenstadt, which is the family estate. Actually, it wasn't a surprise, I had been told about it, to find our home remodeled into a beautiful museum. They have added an annex. Remind me over lunch, I will show you photographs.

SMITH: But you didn't go back to live and work there?

HOFFMANN: Never. In fact, once I was asked if I would become successor to Hedwig Kenner, the professor of archaeology at Vienna. I was in India at the time, having got the letter with four weeks' delay, much to the disappointment of my Austrian friends, and I declined.



SMITH: The stereotype of Hamburg is that it's the most English city in Germany, with long historical connections.

HOFFMANN: Connected to England, that holds true.

SMITH: Was that still the case in some ways in the sixties?

HOFFMANN: It still was, on a social level, certainly. Yes. But the thing that really counted in Hamburg was the port, and not the museum.

SMITH: As we wind up for this morning, I wanted to bring up Willibald Sauerländer, who has written about German art history, going into what he calls a would-be positivism. In the post-World War II period, there is a reaction against spiritualization.

HOFFMANN: I would like to have the reference, because I am interested in Sauerländer; he is one of the founding fathers of our museum, Kunst und Gewerbe, and it's a period, also, that interests me.

SMITH: Okay, I'll have to send you the reference. We'll stop for this morning.





SESSION TWO: 22 MAY, 1998

[Tape III, Side One]

SMITH: Let me start by asking if you have any further thoughts from yesterday to add to the record.

HOFFMANN: To be perfectly frank, I haven't given yesterday a thought.

SMITH: Okay, no problem.

HOFFMANN: Just continue where we left off.

SMITH: There were a couple of questions I did want to ask you about Hamburg. First of all, yesterday afternoon [off-tape] you mentioned that you knew Martin Warnke, and you met him when you were in Hamburg in the sixties. I guess I would like to ask, What was the relationship between art history and archaeology and the Kunst und Gewerbe Museum at that time? Did you know Warnke both in a professional and a social manner?

HOFFMANN: I knew him only in a social manner. There was no relationship at all between Kunst und Gewerbe and the department of art history, except that I used to go over there to use their books. Warnke at the time had a farm somewhere in the outskirts of Hamburg, and this group of students, including Thomas Sello, would go out there sometimes and he would prepare a barbecue for us and we'd chat. It was more social.

SMITH: Was there a Warburg legacy in Hamburg, a kind of intellectual continuation



of what Warburg had been doing?

HOFFMANN: I am sure there was at the art-historical institute, in the person of Warnke, and Horst Bredekamp. It occurs to me that I was friends with Maria Warburg, who was his great niece. In fact, I used to go swimming at the Warburg home out on the Elbe, and I would talk about her great uncle with her, but there was nothing more worth mentioning.

SMITH: Did Warburg's work seem to have any relevance to what you were doing in archaeology?

HOFFMANN: That comes later.

SMITH: That comes later, again. Well, perhaps we should move on to "later." In '73 you decide to leave Hamburg.

HOFFMANN: Actually, I did forget something yesterday. In '72 I was invited by John Boardman for a visiting term at his college, Merton College, Oxford, and the museum let me go. It was just four months, or something like that. It was thanks to John and his college that I first sniffed into the field of anthropology. I had access to all these wonderful old books, and the new ones as well, in the Merton College library. I discovered that there was a whole section on anthropology, which fascinated me, so I began reading. Then John introduced me to the professor of anthropology, we chatted, and talking to him was quite important.

SMITH: Was this E. E. Evans-Pritchard?



HOFFMANN: No, I got to know him a bit later, when I came back for a year at Oxford. This was Rodney Needham. Now we can jump ahead for a year and come to the point where I did actually leave Hamburg. At that time, back in '72, I visited the Pitt Rivers Museum and there happened to be a show on called *Nuristan, Land of Light*. It was a show about Afghanistan, organized by the curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum, an American by the name of Schuyler Jones.

I was so impressed by that exhibition and the way it was done didactically that I decided I must meet this man. A telephone call was made, Schuyler invited me up to his office, we had coffee and talked about anthropology, and it was at that point that I decided that it was time to study anthropology. In fact, he invited me to join his department as a diploma student, and we discussed ways and means of doing this. In the end I got a grant from the British Council, and with that I resigned my position at the museum, renouncing pension, because this seemed more important.

SMITH: What was lacking in what you had been doing that anthropology seemed to be so appealing?

HOFFMANN: That's a very good question. The word that comes up is energy. Studying anthropology gave me fresh energy. Frankly, I had become bored. This business of quantification and dating and describing, and attributing, purchasing things for the museum and publishing them in the museum bulletin and so on—it held no interest any longer. It was good for twelve years, but now the time had come. The



1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical analysis performed.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the findings of the research. The data shows a clear trend of increasing activity over time.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It suggests that the results have significant implications for the field of study and may lead to further research in this area.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes the study. It summarizes the main findings and provides a final statement on the importance of the research.

idea was, of course, with *Habilitation*, I could teach anywhere. In fact, I did come back and take up teaching at Hamburg university, but at that point I was so euphoric about anthropology and fed up with archaeology that I sold my library, packed all my belongings in my Volkswagen, gave up my flat in Hamburg, and set off for England.

In England I settled in Oxford; they took me on as a mature student. I was a member of Wolfson College, but I lived in a furnished room that the British Council provided. I talked yesterday about Freudian analysis, which I had had enough of after a year. My analyst at that time toasted my decision bravely with a glass of champagne, but she said, "I still have a feeling there is some work to be done. You have worked on the father, but the mother has to be dealt with." So no sooner did I get to Oxford than I met a charming young woman named Dolores, and she became my Jungian analyst. In fact, I had a love affair with her, which was very good for the analysis, contrary to what one hears about never having personal relationships.

In this room, in the center of Oxford, I was with Dolores one night and I had a dream. I dreamed that a woman in a window was watching us, and it seemed to be the landlady. I told this dream to Dolores and she was delighted. She said, "This is a dream that you can work with using the technique of active imagination," which means that you go back into the dream in the twilight stage between waking consciousness and sleep, something like daydreaming. You begin permutating, varying the dream, using your imagination; you let the story go on, and it starts to



change. Of course, the role of the therapist in this is to use suggestion in a supporting way.

The next night I redreamed the dream and there was my mother. I was very proud to be able to present this to my analyst. She said, "Yes, very good, but do you want to go on living with mother watching through the window every time you make love?" I said, "No, no. I've got to go back!" The following night it was mother again, and in my semi-conscious dreaming I transformed her into a pillar of salt and was very proud. So the outcome of it was, I finished with mother, the mother problem was solved, and I felt very much lighter and freer. I actually started having a very good relationship with my physical mother, who was still alive.

So that is the Jungian analysis. At the time, I spent my days going to lectures and preparing seminar papers and doing anthropology. I spent my evenings going to London, because I was becoming interested in psychology. The triggering event was a visit to a book dealer in London, Dillon's bookshop. I happened to be browsing and I saw on the shelf, in the psychology section, a book called *Free to Feel*, and this seemed to fit in very much with this work that I was doing in Jungian therapy. Jerome Liss, *Free to Feel*. I immediately bought the book and started reading avidly. It was a guide to the new therapies. I had always been interested in Wilhelm Reich; in fact, I had all his works at home from my period in Hamburg: *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, and the rest. But this book talked about something called the

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neo-Reichian movement, and listed addresses and telephone numbers.

Among the members listed there was a Norwegian neo-Reichian therapist by the name of Gerda Boyesen. I immediately contacted Gerda, went to see her, it was love at first sight, and I was into Reichian therapy. Love at first sight not in the same sense as with Dolores. Gerda was a person of my own age, or possibly even older, a distinguished Reichian therapist, and before I knew what I was doing, I had joined a professional training group in neo-Reichian therapy. It was fascinating. I became a member of Gerda's extended family in London, at the Centre for Bio-Energy. There was something at the Centre called the . . . I can't remember the name of it, it looked like a telephone booth. It was a box that Wilhelm Reich had designed.

SMITH: Oh, the Orgone box.

HOFFMANN: The Orgone box, thank you! Very impressive that you should know this! Yes, I went into the Orgone box and got very high just by sitting in this box, which again opened up new perspectives, a new kind of awareness of energy and of myself as part of the universe.

SMITH: In the daytime you were exploring anthropology, and in the evenings psychology. Were you also beginning to do sculpture at this time?

HOFFMANN: No, sculpture comes later, in Italy. At this point I was very much into Gerda's work. Gerda's daughter Ebba was a therapist, and at the same time that I was in the training group she was doing body work on me. And there was Gerda's son



Paul Kyle Boyesen, who was also a body therapist. But with Ebba and the body work, other things started coming up, a lot of very deep emotion—the logical continuation from the Jungian work.

On one weekend, Gerda's group held a workshop somewhere outside London, in the country. There was an American in this group, who had just come back from India, and he was full of stories about sages and mystics, and that woke the desire to go to India myself, that should be mentioned.

SMITH: And you did go?

HOFFMANN: Yes. Not immediately. It was a while before I started going to India. I had explored India in 1962. I went to Konarak, to Puri, and other sites to study Indian art and architecture because I had taken courses at Harvard with Benjamin Rowland, but I soon joined the hippy scene, particularly in Nepal. I took the bus from Patna across Raxaul, the Nepalese frontier, and up and up and up the mountain, the Himalayas, into the Kathmandu valley, and when I got there I met hippies who were amazed that I took the bus. They said, "Don't you know there's a plane you can take?" [laughter] I am digressing a bit; that's not that important, although I did have experiences that one had in those years, smoking cannabis and all of that. In a sense, that was important as well. But let's get back.

SMITH: For you there was a progression, a spiritual journey, in a way, through Freud and Jung to Reich.

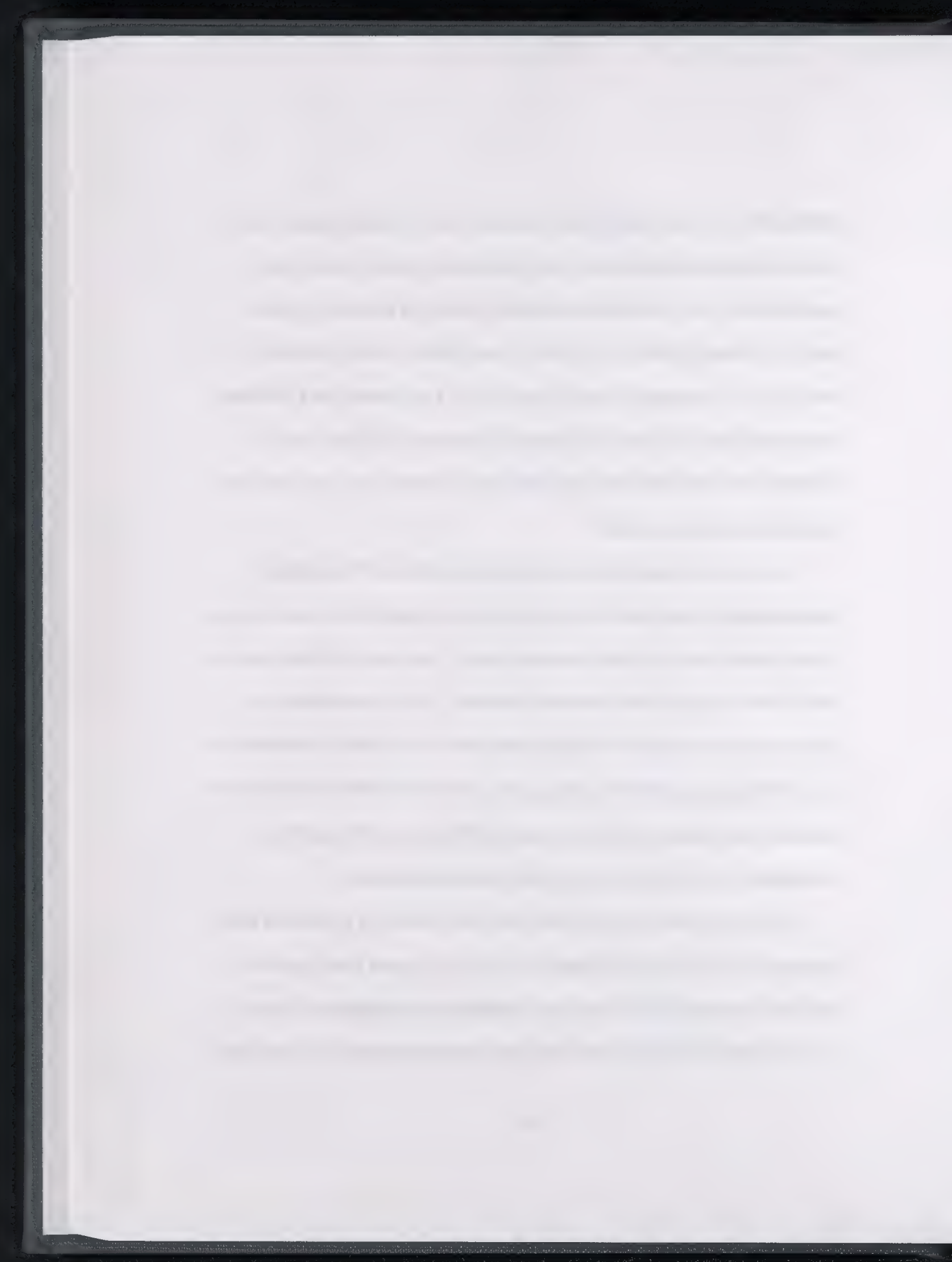


HOFFMANN: Yes, you have put me back on the track; it became a spiritual quest. I met an English friend from Geneva by the name of David Walters; in fact, he is a psychotherapist today. I met him on the street in Delhi, and at that time he was a disciple of Maharaj Ji (Neem Karol i Baba), whose ashram is on the outskirts of Delhi. He said, "You've got to come to the ashram." I was curious and I had heard of gurus and sages and I said, "Yes, of course I will come." This David was somewhat of an inner circle figure, and had access to a master, who was an old man with a white beard, and very tall.

I got to this ashram and there were literally thousands of Indians sitting outside with their families and their lunches and so on, waiting for the master to come out and give discourse. His chair was already there. I was taken in by David and sat down in the living room with a few other Europeans. The door opened and the master came in accompanied by a woman, and he said a few words to everyone in the room: "Where are you from? How long will you be in India?" When he came to me he said the same banalities, but his eyes were like X-rays and I felt completely . . . I was transfixed. Then he went out the door to the waiting multitude.

The woman who was his assistant took me by the hand as I started out the door and she said, "The master told me to tell you"—the master hadn't spoken to her—"not to take those pills." Well, up in Kathmandu some hippies had given me two pills. They said, "This is speed. Take them when the moment is right, with the





right person." I had no intention of taking them then, but I had put them in my pocket and forgotten them. This was a month earlier. They were still in my pocket. Needless to say, I disposed of them the first opportunity I could find. I was quite shaken.

SMITH: Did you stay there?

HOFFMANN: No. No, I forgot about masters for the time being and went back to Hamburg. This was a flashback, actually, to where we had left off.

SMITH: You move through Freud, you move into Jung—

HOFFMANN: Then I started reading mysticism, the Indian masters, Pathanjali, Ramana Maharshi, and others.

SMITH: And this is happening parallel to your continuing to be a professional archaeologist?

HOFFMANN: Yes, I was still at Oxford, attending Rodney Needham's courses and seeing Evans-Pritchard from time to time for tea, talking and reminiscing—it was him reminiscing, not me. I was becoming friendly with Godfrey Lienhard. He was one of the famous people, rather alcoholic, in Oxford at the time. I was going to his courses. The year was coming to an end, and I had learned an enormous amount. I had absorbed everything like a dry sponge. I didn't feel interested in taking an examination. In fact, the people in the department were a bit disappointed. I wasn't interested in degrees, I had gotten all I wanted.



Just before I went back to Hamburg, I went over to Cambridge to visit a friend whom I had met at Oxford, who was in the anthropology department there. We passed a pub and my friend looked in the window and said, "Oh, there's Edmund Leach at the bar, do you want to meet him?" Of course I had read Edmund Leach, I had heard about him, the great man at Cambridge, and I said, "Yes, of course."

We went in, and Sir Edmund was very gracious and bought us both a beer. We stood at the bar and chatted, and I told him I was in Oxford studying social anthropology, and he said, "Why?" I said I wanted to apply anthropology to the study of Greek archaeology. He said, "Where do you intend doing this?" I said I hadn't really thought about it, and he said, "Why not Cambridge?" I thought yes, why not Cambridge? And that was it. We left, and my friend said, "You don't realize what's happened to you. This is an invitation. You have got to write Edmund a letter and send him your curriculum vitae and tell him that you would like to come and join the department."

I did, and Edmund arranged for me to join the department of anthropology at Cambridge for a year. I became a member of high table at King's College, where he was provost at the time. So I stayed in England for another year rather than going back to Hamburg. It seemed just wonderful. In fact, it gave me also a chance to continue going to London at night. At that time I was getting into anthropology as a professional perspective, and at the same time, psychology had also become a





professional perspective. So these two options were running side by side.

SMITH: Were they connected?

HOFFMANN: They were starting to become connected. But more through Jung than through Reich. I was a very good student at Cambridge, and I gave a paper—

SMITH: You were taking seminars?

HOFFMANN: I was taking seminars, and they were wonderful; they were quite different from those at Oxford. In Oxford I was not allowed to ask questions, not even in Rodney Needham's seminars. Can you imagine it? When I wanted to ask him a question in the seminar, he said, "No questions," and that was that, whereas, Cambridge was very much questioning and discussing and meeting informally with the faculty. Edmund had become a father figure to me. At this time I took up a group of Greek vases known as the *askoi*. If I am not mistaken, John Boardman had put me onto them. I thought that I would study these vases from an anthropological perspective, and this became my project at Cambridge.

Edmund read it and said, "Well, this will make a fine supplement to the Royal Anthropological Institute Annual Proceedings." He contributed a preface, in which he said, "One would think that there would be a connection, as there was just two generations ago, between classical archaeology and anthropology, but in fact this is not the case," and he went on just putting down classical archaeology. I hadn't put him up to this, but it woke the mischievous boy in me. It didn't go over well. It



appeared and I sent copies of it to John Boardman, who thereupon reviewed it, saying in his review, "Anthropology, yes, but not like this!" It made me rather an outcast in the field.

SMITH: When you were at Oxford, were you studying anthropology in relationship to what it had to say about the ancient world?

HOFFMANN: No. I didn't have time for that. I was acquiring theory, because theory was completely lacking in my background before Oxford. I was also reading fieldwork: Evans-Pritchard, [Bronislaw] Malinowski, and all of that, whereas, in Cambridge anthropology was becoming more theoretical and there was more of a link to the Marxist tradition. I was thinking of going to Paris to study Marxist anthropology with Godelier, but at the London School of Economics there was Maurice Bloch, and I wanted to meet him. I went to him and I spent an hour or two in his office. He was talking and it was all so abstract that it was beyond me. At that time psychology was really coming into the foreground and anthropology was starting to merge with it, and through Gerda Boyesen I met an American, a man called Jay Stattman.

SMITH: The Gestalt therapist?

HOFFMANN: Yes. Jay was a Gestalt therapist. He combined Gestalt with guided imagery, so there was a direct connection with the Jungian active imagination. I got very interested in this. He did a weekend workshop at Gerda's. Using images, in



other words, symbols, he was getting body energy moving, in the neo-Reichian sense, without touching you, just by using symbolism, and this fascinated me, because of course this connected up with antiquity. I decided that active imagination was for me.

I went to Holland for a year. Jay had an institute there, near Utrecht. The place was called Ewickshoeve; it was a hunting lodge that belonged to the royal family, who had their summer residence nearby. It was a beautiful large villa in the middle of the woods. I started working there and signed on with Jay on a long-term training program to become a therapist. At the same time as I was doing groups with him he was working on me using his technique. He combined body work with active imagination, Reichian and neo-Reichian.

While Jay was doing body work on me, symbols were coming up, and they still were all Jungian. I was very keen on discussing them with Jay and he said, "Oh, Herbert, that's just your grandiosity." I was getting very Christian symbols: crosses, a crucifix, and all sorts of archetypal things that I had read about in Jung. He said, "Just keep breathing," and he kept working on me, and as I would breathe deeper the imagery changed and became more dynamic, more living; animals would come up, and energy flowed very strongly and I realized, "My God, yes, this really is the way to work!"

At that time I was commuting back and forth to Buxtehude, near Hamburg. I was living with Ursula, who is now my wife. The idea was still to go to Holland and



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set myself up as a Jay therapist. In fact, we had rented a flat in Amsterdam where I was going to start working with a co-therapist by the name of John Bell, an Englishman. I had given him money to rebuild this old bicycle shop in Amsterdam, and before I knew what was happening, John had disappeared with the money and gone to India. Very funny.

So that didn't work out, but at the same time I had made contact with the psychotherapy scene in Hamburg. I will tell you something else that is amusing more than interesting: I had started working as a stutter therapist at the hospital in Hamburg. I had trained myself to work with people who stuttered, using various forms of therapy. I won't go into the details of it because it's not to the point, but through my stutter therapist instructor I heard that there was a person called Isha Bloomberg, who was coming for a demonstration, who did something called Gestalt therapy, which I had read about in Jerome Liss's book. Who is the father of Gestalt?

SMITH: Wolfgang Köhler.

HOFFMANN: No, that's Gestalt in the art-historical sense. I mean the Gestalt therapist.

SMITH: Fritz [Frederick S.] Perls is the name.

HOFFMANN: You are amazing. You are filling in all the missing names, all the shadows in the past. Yes, indeed. I went to Isha Bloomberg's demonstration; he was up in Hamburg organizing a Hamburg training group. In fact, he had been a student

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of Fritz Perls and knew him personally. I took to Isha immediately. He was very much like me, my own age. I started a three-year training course, and during that training course I came to Italy, because that is where Isha had a center; in fact, it's just over the hill from where we are right now. So in the end, after three years of training, living in Hamburg, teaching at the university—

SMITH: Three years of Gestalt training?

HOFFMANN: Three years of Gestalt training.

SMITH: With Bloomberg?

HOFFMANN: With Bloomberg, yes. I was part of the Hamburg group, very good people up there, training to become Isha therapists, and by that time my relationship with Isha had become very warm and very close. This was never really formalized in any way, but I decided to come down and work with Isha. I said to him, "I think I will come here and do what you did, buy a farm." He had restructured an old farm which he had bought for next to nothing—we passed very near there yesterday, on the way to Siena. I said to him, "If you ever happen to see a place, let me know." I knew that the farms that had been abandoned in the fifties, when the *mezzadria* was abolished, were now available.

Very shortly, Isha sent photographs of a place which I went down to see. It's just down below, in the valley behind here, and it was very nice. It was a mill, and there was a pond. I came down with Ursula and we looked at it, but it was really

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quite small. It was just four rooms connected by doors, one to the other, in a row. The person showing it was a local character from Panzano and I said to him, pointing up the hill at a beautiful building, "If a place like that up there becomes available, I would be interested."

[Tape III, Side Two]

HOFFMANN: It was available, and I then spent the next year trying to buy it. It belonged to a lady in Florence who wanted to sell it, but there was a Sardinian shepherd in it who was keeping his flock there, and he made it very clear, he said, *Io non vado via mai*, which means "You'll never get me out of here." And he meant it. After a year of the owner trying to persuade this man to leave, I realized that it was a waste of time and I gave it all up. By this time I had a friend in Florence called Massimo Torniai, who is still a friend, a lawyer. He had already set up the contract for one place, which fell through, and he said, "Don't give up." We said okay, we'd give it one more chance. Massimo telephoned to Hamburg and he said, "Listen, you had better come down again." We came down and rented a flat in Castellina for the summer and we started looking seriously and we saw many, many places. In fact, we saw a ruined castle with an abandoned farm attached to it. You could have the castle if you bought the farm. I saw myself as the owner of a castle, but, fortunately, Ursula kept her feet on the ground.

We saw various places, very close to here, and at the end of the day, Massimo

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said, "Well, there's one other place belonging to this notary public, who owns this whole hill." We looked at four farms that day, all very interesting. Massimo said, "Let's just go and see the sunset at this last place. It's much too big for you, and you won't be interested, but I would like to show it to you because I love the place." We got out of the car, looked around, and said, "This is it, we'll take it." We didn't ask how much it cost. I was completely euphoric from the view, actually, that we are seeing now, towards Radda. I said, "Set up the contract."

We had very little money at the time, fifty thousand marks between us, and the place was eighty-six, if I remember correctly, and it was in ruins. It had been burnt by the Germans at the end of the war, when they were pulling out of Italy. It was in very bad shape. There was another little house, our guest house now, that was in better shape, and we decided we would just move into that and if we had the money then we would go on; otherwise, we would sell it again at some time. By this time I had acquired a great deal of confidence in existence, so I said, "Don't worry, things will happen, this is going to turn out." Ursula was still a bit skeptical. She didn't quite feel that this was the time to quit her job—she was teaching art at *Gymnasium*—so she stayed in Hamburg for another year. She would come during vacations always.

I started coming down and spending longer periods here. I was living in this little house, working with the mason who had fixed up Isha's place; I was using his expertise here. This mason finally said, "Now look, I am not going to do another bit

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of work. You have got to do the big house first, otherwise you will be living next to a skeleton and you won't like it. You won't be happy and I won't be happy." He persuaded me to start work on this big house without a roof. How could I afford it?

Then something incredible happened. An aunt of mine died in Vienna, the beer brewery aunt. I think I mentioned her before. I was quite close to her; she was a lovely old lady and I would visit her in her old age home. Once, I brought her up to the Chianti and we went by car down to Rome and I showed her the sights. So she died, and I didn't think she had a cent to her name, but in fact she did, from three different bank accounts. She had been working as a nurse in Israel and she got a pension from Israel and money from her Czechoslovakian brewery. In fact, the family money, part of it, confiscated things, started coming back via both aunts—the aunt in Vienna and the aunt in the United States.

So I flew to Vienna with an empty suitcase, with a cousin of mine, a Viennese Wolf, who has since then died. We went to three banks and took out the money Luisa had left me and packed it into a suitcase. I knew that there were currency restrictions in Austria at that time; you couldn't take out that much money, but, again, trusting, trusting, I didn't give it another thought. I just went to the airport the same day, and when the customs guard said, "What's in the suitcase?" I said, "Just money." And he laughed and waved me through. [laughter]

We started redoing the roof entirely. The roof is the most expensive part of





restoring a house. So with one thing and another this took a year of work. I was working very hard myself and getting in fine physical shape, working with Isha, learning to be a Gestalt therapist. By this time Ursula quit her job and we both settled here.

SMITH: You had left the academic world in the early seventies. How were you supporting yourself?

HOFFMANN: Yes, but this time I had left the academic world entirely. I had become a Gestalt therapist and I was seeing clients here. I also had money left over from the aunts, and I had a small pension from my museum job and from the university. We decided to come down and live simply, not spend much money, which we are still doing. Before I started sculpting, Ursula became a successful painter down here and she does quite well. She had an exhibition in Radda, in the town hall, in our second year here, and we made very good connections.

We made very good friends here, including the *sindaco*, the mayor of Radda at the time when the communists were in charge here, a wonderful person who is still a great friend—Giorgio Bianchi and his wife. He is no longer *sindaco* now but he was very supporting then and his Greek wife Eli also started getting me clients. The word got around that here is somebody who is doing good work.

SMITH: What was it about Gestalt therapy that had held you? It sounds like neither Freudian nor Jungian nor Reichian could do it; you had to pass on to something else.



HOFFMANN: It's a very good question. I took to Gestalt therapy like a fish to water. It is holistic. I had been really getting into holistic living. Gestalt means literally the entire person, the way Fritz Perls uses the term. There are two directions that Gestalt took in Germany; one was the theoretical—[Max] Wertheimer, [Rudolf] Arnheim, [Paul] Goodman. I can't think of all the other names because I wasn't that much interested in them at the time. The direction that interested me was of course Perls. Fritz Perls was an aberrant disciple of Freud's. He broke with Freud, emigrated to the United States, set himself up in California and later in Vancouver and started Gestalt therapy, which was combining Gestalt theory with psychotherapy. Gestalt is a very open approach; it's really an art in the same sense that anthropology is an art. It can be combined with anthropology, it can be combined with Jung, it can be combined with Reichian body work; it's flexible.

This is what I was taught, and this is what I still practice as a Gestalt therapist. I am still seeing clients. I don't call them patients; it's part of a great American movement in the therapy scene known as humanistic psychology. So I don't have clients . . . I mean patients—a Freudian slip! [laughter] We don't have patients, we have clients, and we encourage them to dream. We don't analyze dreams, we work with them in the "here and now." The grand old man, Fritz, had been quite influenced by Eastern mysticism. "Here and now" of course has become New Age jargon, but at the time of Perls it was Buddhist philosophy, which he had read a lot of.





So you are working in the present and you are telling a person to *be* his dream, so if a person is telling you, "I dreamed that I was," you explain Gestalt language, asking him or her to say, "I am," which immediately activates the imagery and brings it into the body. You encourage breathing, and you bring people into the present. You ask supporting questions the way a Jungian therapist does. So if a person says, "I am an empty house," and then starts talking slower and slower you say, "Keep breathing," and you ask supporting questions like, "Are there windows in your house?" And the person would say, "Yes, now I see it, of course. There is a window and a beautiful view outside, and light is coming in." So you are in a sense influencing a person's dream in a supporting way. But you don't interfere, because many things that come up in dreams have to be gone through, so if that house has no windows, and it's just black inside, it may be important. You've got to use your judgment.

So this is very creative. I won't go on about Gestalt. There is a bible by Fritz Perls, Goodman, and [Ralph F.] Hefferline: *Gestalt Therapy*. There are wonderful books by Perls: *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*, and there is a very funny Californian book called *In and Out the Garbage Pail*, which is autobiographical. These are wonderful reading. I loved Fritz, I loved Isha, and I was really set to become his assistant, and then he died.

SMITH: So you were left here by yourself, but you seem to have prospered here, in a



spiritual way.

HOFFMANN: Yes, it has been very fulfilling, very fulfilling indeed. Both of us have become stronger and healthier and more positive in every way. I suppose this might be a good time to start talking about sculpture, which entered my life, and I am just trying to think how it came about. Yes, it came about seven or eight years ago, when I happened to see a poster in Castellina about an art show in the Rocca, the castle there. I had some time to spend so I went in, and I was very much taken by what I saw. It was a Californian sculptor, a woman called Jill Vanderhof. Her sculptures were symbolic, they were beautiful, they just took me aesthetically, psychologically, and anthropologically. There were all sorts of symbols which fascinated me, like a chained wing in white marble, lying there on a table. It was one of the most beautiful pieces of modern sculpture I have seen in a long time. I thought, I must get to know this person and see what she's into.

I came back the next day and there was Jill; in fact, the guard told me that she usually came in in the morning. I told her how much I admired her work and she said, "Why, you can do it, do you want to try?" She was staying at an Australian Center for the Visual Arts, nearby, using pneumatic equipment and working there. She said, "Take this piece of stone and try sculpting." So I started sculpting and I could see that the stone could be formed into something, and it was a great pleasure. I felt, "This is for me."



I went up to Pietrasanta, bought equipment . . . I am telescoping a bit now; in fact, I am telescoping too much. I spent at least two years agonizing, probably ruining my health, banging away at stone and creating just dreadful things, which I thought were quite beautiful at the time—heads and whatnot. But at one point I thought, "I do need to see if I can get some training." At this time there was no training available, really, but all the professional sculptors seemed to be working in Pietrasanta and in Carrara, so that was obviously the place to go. With Ursula's encouragement—she said, "This is something you've got to do, do it!"—I went up there, rented myself a flat for a three- or four-month period, a working space in a quite well-known atelier called Studio Sem, where a number of modern sculptors have worked, and I bought myself pneumatic equipment.

Studio Sem is all pneumatic: you have a working table, you have a supply of compressed air and a hose, and there is a large selection of stones that you can choose from. Nobody advised me not to take the stone I did take, and I chose the hardest—also the cheapest, I should say, because stone can be quite expensive. I chose something called Bianco B; it's a sort of grayish-white, not very good Carrara marble. I went into myself to see what would come up, and up came a very classical goddess.

SMITH: With multiple breasts?

HOFFMANN: It didn't go that far; I just had an idea of a Greek seated goddess, so I



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started doing it. I worked on it for days and weeks. Next to me there was a Korean sculptor, Mr. Pak. He was a good sculptor, quite successful and well-known, and he took pity on me. When he saw that I was really ruining myself he would come over and say, "No, hold your chisel this way." He was helping me and teaching me very generously. Mr. Pak was doing landscapes out of huge blocks of marble, which he would have sawed for him in a certain way. Studio Sem also had a water-powered saw and they would cut stone for you. Mr. Pak said, "If you are going to do a seated figure, you had better have two cuts." So I had Studio Sem reduce my block to something more reasonable. In fact, three cuts were necessary to transform my huge block.

SMITH: So they cut out the lap.

HOFFMANN: Yes, they cut out the lap and I had something now that was only about a meter and a half by a meter before me. So I worked and worked on that. In the meantime, Mr. Pak had finished at least three fine sculptures. In the end I did make something that looked recognizably like a Greek goddess, but there was still a lot of work left to be done.

By this time I had found myself a teacher, locally. Quite by chance I heard that there was a man called Nigel Konstam. As it comes back now, I have got to modify this a little bit. I had been going to Nigel before I went to Pietrasanta; in fact, I had even had a friend, a local sculptor at San Gimignano, who had been teaching



me. It was he who had told me that I should go up to Pietrasanta and start working with pneumatic equipment rather than killing myself using a hammer by hand.

I foolishly thought that using new power equipment and pneumatic equipment would be easier, but it turned out to be more of the same. I took my seated goddess back home with me and looked at it and said, "No, I have got to take it over to Nigel's place." Nigel encouraged me and said, "Okay, I'll buy it from you." He in fact finished it, and it's sitting over there now in the Centro Verrocchio, of which I in the meantime have become advisory consultant to. I have been working with Nigel ever since.

Nigel Konstam is something quite rare as a sculptor. He is traditional, he is figurative, but he is not a classicist; he is not into the sort of thing that I do, namely the sort of imagery that I work with in therapy and in my anthropological archaeology. Figures like Orpheus interest me. Under Nigel's supervision I started doing my first piece of sculpture that I was really happy with. I should say that my first piece of sculpture, which I then sold, is the piece that you see over there.

SMITH: The Orpheus?

HOFFMANN: The Orpheus, yes.

SMITH: When you work on the sculpting of an Orpheus figure, what do you feel about the figure? What do you learn about the meaning of Orpheus that you might not have known as an archaeologist, as a scholar?





HOFFMANN: Yes, it's a very nice question because it's something that I am dealing with in the lecture that I am now preparing to give in Tromsø about how symbolism works. I don't know if this is how other sculptors work, but working with Orpheus, I identified totally; I became Orpheus, in a sense, and at the same time there was a struggle to transform a piece of stone into Orpheus. At the end, when I had the outer figure in stone, I somehow couldn't get the inner figure, and I got myself into an impasse over the eyes. In a fit of frustration I took my big power drill, and I just went into his eyes. When I looked at it again, it was perfect; I had a blind Orpheus, but with a quality of *inner* seeing, like the one which I talk about in the Sotades book in connection with Glaukos, who is initiated as seer—it was suddenly there.

SMITH: So the sculptures that you have here, the ones that I have seen, all seem to relate to the Sotadean imagery.

HOFFMANN: Precisely.

SMITH: They overlap in such a close way that I have to assume that your working on the book and your working on the sculpture are two ways of dealing with the same issue.

HOFFMANN: It happened in such an amusing way. After having finished this figure in stone, I liked it, and it was there, and someone came along and said, "I see this figure in bronze. You've got to have it cast in bronze, and I will buy it from you."

This was someone whom I hadn't known, it just happened out of the blue. He made a



proposal to me, he said, "You find out how much it costs, and I will pay double that. You'll cast one for yourself and one for me." The other one is now in Germany, in a music academy, where it is functioning as a symbol in its own way.

But I am back at Nigel Konstam's now, getting involved with another figure, and by this time I wanted to do something that had to do with meditation, because I was meditating a lot, and I wanted somehow to get this quality of meditation into my figure. Somehow the idea of the monk came up—the monk in me—and I started with the idea of making a kind of squatting Indian clasping his knees. Suddenly, it dawned on me. I had a vision of this figure; it came like that, that this was of course Glaukos. I recognized the figure after I had it blocked out, and I realized of course what I was doing. Then I made an enlargement of the reconstruction drawing of the Glaukos cup in the British Museum, and I had my figure in profile. Of course, there was still the front and the back and the other side. Nigel helped me and it turned into my best piece, the piece I like most. I think it's a wonderful piece and I have sold it twice cast in bronze.

Unfortunately the first time I had it cast I used Nigel's foundry in Sesta Fiorentina, and they did a terrible job of it: bad casting, full of holes, which they filled in and smeared with mastic, and they put a horrible patina on the thing. Unfortunately, I had paid them before I knew what I was doing. I took the piece back and I said, "No, I can't live with this dull green patina." I hadn't realized of



course that it was badly cast. I stripped it down again, intending to repatinate it myself, and then I saw what had happened. So I took it back up to the people who cast Orpheus up in Pietrasanta. I had been disloyal to them by going to this place in Sesta Fiorentina, but they very generously consented to fill in the holes with solder.

SMITH: The piece over there, the two boys looking into the mirror; how does that relate to Sotades?

HOFFMANN: The piece that you see over there relates less to archaeology than to modern art. The idea for that piece came from a visit to the Picasso museum in Paris. I saw several paintings there, paintings he did in a certain period: women running on the beach, the seated women, and this particular group called *La lecture de lettre*. There's an older boy and there's a younger boy, and I thought, "Yes, of course, Glaukos and Polyidos. I will have them looking into the mirror together, the mirror being a symbol of reflection." It's a very Indian thing, the Indian sages talk about polishing the mirror, meaning looking in. This is very much an idea that I connect with Krishnamurti, the idea of polishing the mirror. It's also Sufi, it's also Gurdjieffian, the idea that you must look within, you must every day polish the mirror, start afresh with a clean slate.

So I started to work on this piece and it wasn't easy because I had never done a two-figure group. This is my only group, in fact. As I realized too late, doing two figures is twice as much work as doing one figure. Many, many hours went into that





piece which you are looking at. At that time my brother came down with his wife for a brief holiday, and I was spending time with them, working on that piece at the same time, and it seemed strange to me that my brother, who was always very interested in what I was doing, my archaeology and even my anthropology, never looked at my sculptures. He must have seen that they were there, but he never said a word about them. It seemed curious to me.

At one point during this sojourn of my older brother here, I mentioned that I was getting interested in family history and thinking vaguely of doing something autobiographical. I am interested less in my mother's family, which has always been talked about: the Nobel prize people, the art historian, and Lucie Rie, the ceramist, and all these distinguished industrious people. No, I wanted to explore my father's family, which was never talked about, other than what I call the family myth of noble birth. I recall that when I was a teenager, back in Newburyport, my brother once came to me and took me aside and said very importantly, "You don't know who you are." He didn't mean the question the way the Indian sages mean it, and he proceeded to initiate me into the "family myth." He said, "Father is a Habsburg," he started telling me about it, and he has identified with that family myth.

Now I am flashing back again to this fairly recent episode. I had discovered family documents to the effect that there is in fact this royal blood, this Habsburg grandmother, that's perfectly true, but she was illegitimate. She was given in adoption

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to a family called Turner, which is my father's middle name. She married her tutor, a Dr. Marcel Hoffmann, who went on to be a public prosecutor in Vienna. When I cleared out the family house in Newburyport, I went through my father's desk, and there were things pertaining to this Dr. Marcel Hoffmann. It turns out that this Dr. Marcel Hoffmann, the public prosecutor in Vienna, from Tarzofka, in Austro-Hungary, seems to have been at least half-Jewish himself. I discovered that his father's name was Moses. So this was all very fascinating, and I presented this to my brother Kurt as a sensational piece of news. I brought out the documents, and I thought that he would be very interested. In fact, in doing this I unwittingly provoked something catastrophic. My brother started accusing me of anti-Semitism. He said, "What you are doing here is nothing but anti-Semitism in reverse." He harangued me and we haven't spoken to each other since.

[Tape IV, Side One]

HOFFMANN: I am answering your question about the sculpture in a very round-about way, so I'll get back to the sculpture. This Moses Hoffmann from Tarzofka wasn't mentioned again. My brother and I parted rather formally. They said how much they enjoyed their stay and so on, and I went back to work on Glaukos and Polyidos, but in the meantime the two figures had become Kurt and Herbert, looking into the mirror. There is the older brother and there is the young brother.

I wrote my brother a very open letter and I sent him a photograph of the





sculpture of the two brothers looking into the mirror, because Kurt is a meditator. He has done a film on sufism, he has done a film on the Kaballah, he has been part of the Gurdjieffian group in Munich, I believe, where he lives, so this was nothing new to him. I didn't get an answer. I got a note from his wife. I had asked, what's the trouble? I suspected what the trouble was. She said, "Well, at the moment I don't think Kurt is looking into the mirror very much." So that's where our relationship stands. There has been a complete . . . in German we would say *Sendepause*, which happens when the radio or television is interrupted.

SMITH: Nothing?

HOFFMANN: There has been nothing happening between us and I am just waiting, hoping that sooner or later our relationship will improve again. I think it's ridiculous to . . . well, I should rephrase my statement and come back to the question of personal identity. I consider myself a Gestalt person who tries to live in the present and not identify with labels. At the same time there is Moses Hoffmann, Eisenstadt, the Habsburgs—it's all part of history, which makes the present.

SMITH: But an obscured history, in some ways.

HOFFMANN: An obscured history, and light should be brought in.

SMITH: Given various factors in your thinking, how does inwardness relate to the concept of the here and now? What is the connection for you between transcendence and immanence? How do they work together to form a duality, or a unity?

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of acquiring knowledge, but also a means of developing the ability to think critically and to make sound judgments.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of acquiring knowledge, but also a means of developing the ability to think critically and to make sound judgments.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of acquiring knowledge, but also a means of developing the ability to think critically and to make sound judgments.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of acquiring knowledge, but also a means of developing the ability to think critically and to make sound judgments.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of acquiring knowledge, but also a means of developing the ability to think critically and to make sound judgments.

HOFFMANN: Unity is the key word, you have given it to me. Transcendancy is being on a cloud, to my way of thinking. The Christian mystics were into that, Meister Eckehart was into that. Some of them were using flagellation to get there quicker; that is half of wholeness, and the other half is immanence, or earth. I think I like to keep my feet on the ground, and your question was, how I can—

SMITH: Well, it started with the relationship of inwardness, withdrawal, to this value of the here and now, or engagement with the immediate.

HOFFMANN: Yes. Which brings us to the subject of meditation, which is a large subject. Meditation for me used to mean being in another space. Meditation now is something that I don't need a special place or a special posture to be in. Meditation in the sense that it is most appealing to me is synonymous with the here and now; it's being aware, it is being *in* the marketplace but not *of* the marketplace. So it's a detached way of being here, and at the same time remaining in contact. As for the other meditation, it's a great luxury, and if I feel that my energy has fallen, I can do what I am doing right now—listening to the birds. I hope they come across on the tape.

SMITH: Some of them will, yes.

HOFFMANN: Just listening to the sounds, you are there.

SMITH: Detached but connected is a way that one could describe your relationship to archaeology.



HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: You said the other night that you could never have done what you have done in the last twenty years had you remained professionally involved.

HOFFMANN: Yes. It would be a lie to say that I am beyond ambition, to say that there is no dualism in my life. Of course there is, I recognize it, especially in sculpture. I caught myself becoming very ambitious and was immediately punished for it. I shall tell you what happened this winter: I was completely wiped out, a slipped disk, not able to work. I thought I would never be able to sculpt again, except possibly in clay. Then, life being what it is, I did go to India again this year, with Ursula, and we visited Gujarat, a place we had never been before. It's a very holy part of India, meaning that there are sacred mountains there—let's say more religious than holy. There are very religious people there called the Jains, who don't eat meat. Gujarat is strictly vegetarian, you can't even find an egg, and of course no alcohol; in fact, no animals are allowed to be killed for human consumption in the whole state of Gujarat, it's amazing.

In spite of this back of mine, I went. My doctor said, "You want to go so much, I think it might do you good. Just go." I could walk for ten minutes, and then I had to sit down or lie down again, but I did go up the sacred mountain; it is the most beautiful place I have ever seen in my life. It's called Palitana. It's like being between heaven and earth, suspended. They carried me up on a bamboo pole, suspended in a





chair, two strong men, and being up there was incredible. It is full of the most exquisite works of art, and something like six hundred temples. I was carried up a thousand flights of steps, and while I was going up, Jain nuns were coming down. Forget Christian nuns; they were not wearing black, they were in white, lovely young girls, tripping down barefoot, filled with ecstasy.

We got to the top and went into these temples. There were not many pilgrims, although it is a pilgrimage site for Jains, for Hindus, and for Buddhists. I experienced these seated figures in the empty temples with the light streaming in both as a religious experience and an artistic experience, and at the same time, I was very interested in this as an historian of art. So it all came together, and that was a wonderful experience.

Coming back to your question about archaeology now. I started to tell you that I tend to get carried away sculpting; it becomes like a mystic experience. I am not there, no longer present; it's what the Greeks called *enthousiasmos*, being filled with God. Enthusiasm in the English sense also applies, and also mania, all of those words. I tend to lose awareness. So one of the tasks I have got to set myself—Excuse me, I should interrupt myself again to say that my faith in life was fully rewarded. By the most incredible chance I stumbled across an osteopath from France who was here visiting friends of mine, saw me in my condition and he said, "Come, I will work on you for half an hour and see what we can do." This man cured me

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within half an hour. No trace of pain—this was two months ago. I am back, I am ready to sculpt again. But with a new awareness of taking better care of my body and not hyperventilating, and getting into these spaces; or if I do, just stopping and observing and remaining aware.

SMITH: Do you think of these progressions and encounters as part of some larger pattern in which your life is embedded, or are these mere chance accidents?

HOFFMANN: Obviously there is a larger pattern, because we are part of the whole. I feel this very strongly. You become connected to it here when you plant olive trees, fertilize them, cut them, harvest the olives, and watch, yes. So olives too are about getting connected.

Coming back to archaeology, I haven't been going to archaeological conferences for years, for reasons that we have gone into, but by chance, not so long ago, an invitation came in the mail, out of the blue, to attend a conference on myth and symbol at the end of the world, at a place called Tromsö, which is somewhere near the Arctic circle, in the northernmost part of Norway. I looked at it and asked myself, how does this fit in? The person who is organizing this conference telephoned a few days later and I asked her, "How did you hear about me?" because I thought I was way out of currency. She said, "I have read your book." She had bought a copy of *Sotades*, which had just come out. The list of invitations had gone out long ago, but she said, "This person I have got to get hold of, he has something to

# THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY JAMES M. SMITH

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

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contribute." I am delighted to be going up there and I have written a paper exploring Glaukos and Polyidos at a deeper level than I have in the book, and I hope it's not too far out. In fact, I was going to ask you to read it.

SMITH: Yes, I do want to read it.

HOFFMANN: To see if this is good scholarship. I hope it is.

SMITH: Well, perhaps we should retreat back to the seventies and talk a little bit about some of your publications, and all of this will get connected again. I wanted to return to the development of some of your archaeological work, which is going on parallel to all the things we have been talking about.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: Not unrelated perhaps, but the relationships are probably not immediately obvious.

HOFFMANN: Maybe they will become more transparent.

SMITH: I thought we might start with the *Sexual and Asexual Pursuit: A Structuralist Approach to Greek Vase Painting*, which you published in '77 with a forward by Edmund Leach. This is probably, at least of the work I have read, the most straightforward structuralist paper, in that you set things up in a number of systems. Was this growing out of the seminar that you took with Leach?

HOFFMANN: Yes, there are two aspects to this question. One is the structuralism in that essay, which was Leachian. It's the part which for me personally was the most



difficult. As much work went into that as had previously gone into full-length books—getting it clear in my own mind. Because I am not basically a theoretician. The other aspect is the holistic, which is a direct consequence of my feeling, even at that time, about works of art and about my own work as an archaeologist. It has to do with what we encountered yesterday in the Aby Warburg exhibition in Siena: tying things up and bringing them together.

In that work on the *askoi*, the premise was that if all things are connected—if culture is indeed connected, which it obviously is—then all these seemingly heterogeneous images on all these various *askoi* must likewise be connected. In fact, Clifford Geertz says much the same: that culture is connected. So I really sweated hard finding the connection, and making it clear and convincing. And it gave me the frame of reference for writing *Sotades*.

SMITH: In what sense?

HOFFMANN: In the *askoi*, many of the subjects which later reappear in Sotades come up, such as satyrs and maenads, which I saw then more in Leachian terms than I do now. There are many *askoi* with satyrs pursuing maenads, as well as animals, which I saw in terms of sexual and asexual encounters, permutations on the sacrificial theme. That kind of formalism is valid, as far as it goes, but it is more what the French are doing, and it doesn't greatly appeal to me. I make that clear in the book, I think, when I say that I would like to go more deeply than considering permutations

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of images as "*jeux d' images*."

I suspect that there may be an element of power play in structuralism as well. A person who does it to my taste is François Lissarrague, particularly in his brilliant work on satyr imagery. But I am really more interested in religious expression—yes, there we come to William James.

SMITH: In *Sexual and Asexual*, it struck me that you actually have two ways of thinking about connection. You have the phrase "a complex network of connections," but then you also use the phrase "systems theory," and it seems to me that perhaps these conflict.

HOFFMANN: With "systems theory" I mean Talcott Parsons. Please consider that as part of my past. I don't read systems theorists any longer. That monograph appeared in 1977.

SMITH: Right, yes.

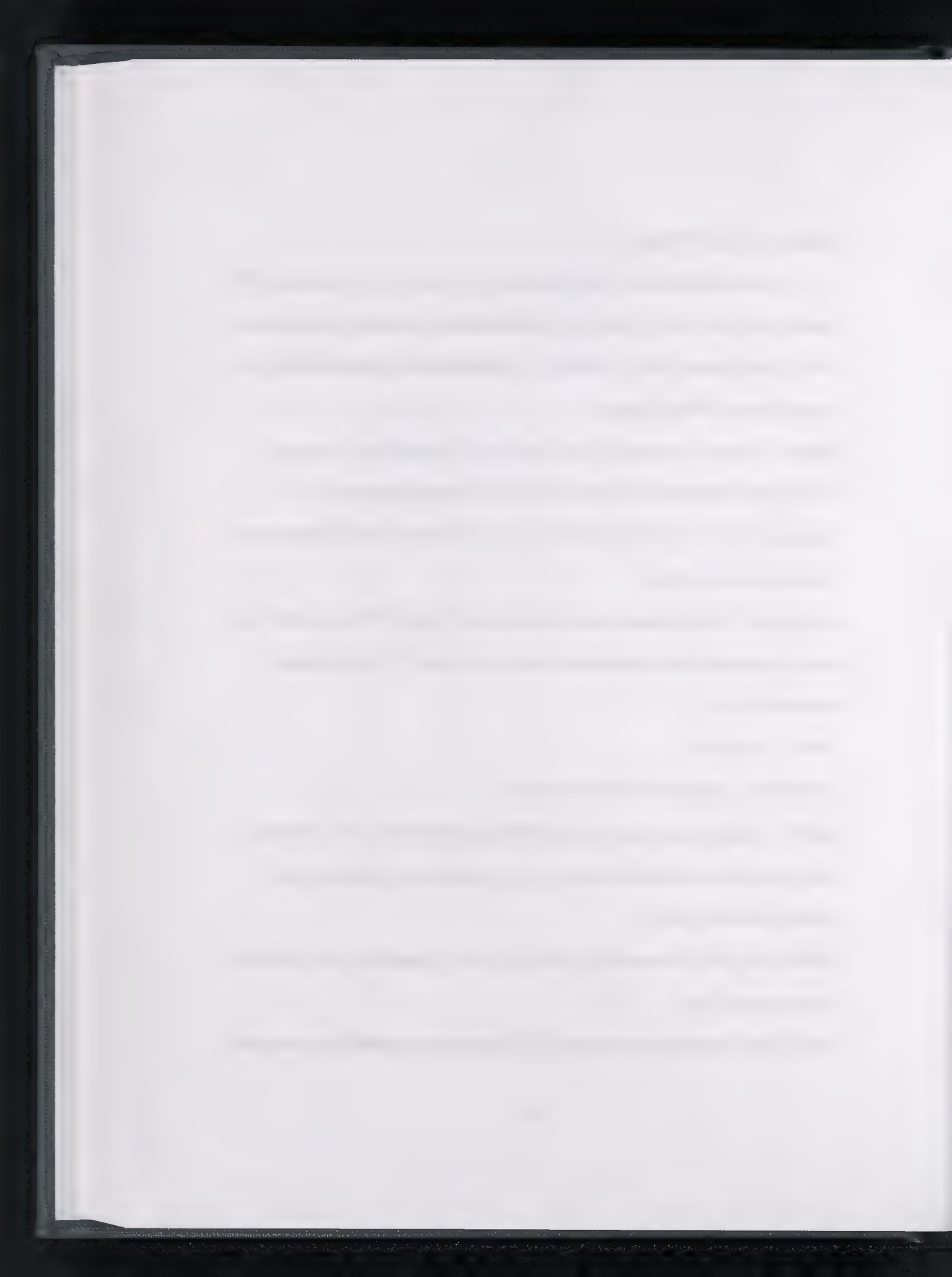
HOFFMANN: Does that answer the question?

SMITH: I guess, in the sense that *Sexual and Asexual Pursuit* is a way of playing with systems theory, and even though the work is satisfactory, you didn't want to continue down that road?

HOFFMANN: No, it was too hard work for my mind. Against the grain. I am not constructed that way.

SMITH: How much of this comes out of discussions in the seminar, particularly with





Leach? I mean, the structure of it, and getting the polarities and the pluses and minuses all lined up.

HOFFMANN: The pluses and minuses actually come from G.E.R. Lloyd, Geoffrey Lloyd, who was also a friend of mine at Cambridge. He is now master of Darwin. His book on polarity is quite brilliant, and it has become a permanent part of my framework of reference. And Edmund Leach's manual on the subject is called *Culture and Communication: How Symbols Communicate*. It's all there, in very condensed form.

SMITH: In terms of *Sotades*, how does your raw treatment of culture and communication and your raw treatment of polarities get digested and assimilated into your own thinking? How do these concepts work their way through the book on *Sotades*?

HOFFMANN: I think I would have to reread *Sotades* to answer that question.

SMITH: What will you be talking about in Tromsö?

HOFFMANN: The conference is on myth and symbol, and the subject of my lecture is how mysticism makes use of symbols, and the role of symbolic imagery. So we are talking about how symbols work, and I go back to my Jungian experience. In the lecture I don't talk about my Jungian therapy, but I start off by giving myself permission to be subjective by pointing out that we are no longer Newtonians, that we now have a new paradigm, and there have been people, from Einstein to [Werner]



Heisenberg, to David Bohm and others, who have experimentally proven that the subject is always part of the scientific discourse and necessarily so. So I have given myself permission to talk subjectively. Having done so, I go back to my Jungian past without saying so, and I talk about Jung and the archetypes very briefly, and then I go on to Tibetan *tankas*, which are paintings on silk with symbolic imagery.

I ask in my lecture, what do Jungian archetypal psychology and Tibetan mysticism have to do with each other. I bring in Glaukos and Polyidos and develop the idea that mythological symbols work on many levels. I use our friend Ken Wilber, whom you may have read, to develop a four-quadrant scheme. It may be a belly-up landing in Tromsø with nobody understanding what I am talking about, but I would like to show how symbols can be analyzed at four levels. Level one being the obvious, the horizontal, what you can see and describe and name. Level two being something like the allegorical level, but still immanent. At level three object becomes closer to subject and subject becomes closer to object. Level four is entirely subjective and personal. I tell them how I got interested in the subject in the first place: I walked into the British Museum, and there was this cup and it fascinated me. So there is symbolism at work. The subject meant something to me at an unconscious level. I had no idea what at the time, but it started energy moving. I discuss this theoretically and try to correlate it with my discussion of the imagery—theory and practice, in other words.





Level four is the most tricky, really. It represents the *hiros gamos*, the merging. I don't say this in the lecture, but I am talking about the kind of experience I described when I was working on the Orpheus figure. So I am suggesting that there is another level of signification, which might be called the "mystic," and that it is a viable way of dealing with imagery.

SMITH: What did you do to familiarize yourself with Greek religion, or the literature on Greek religion, since that didn't seem to be part and parcel of your archaeological training?

HOFFMANN: Amongst other things, I read Walter Burkert. You will find his name mentioned.

SMITH: And of course Jane Harrison was mentioned.

HOFFMANN: Ah, of course, Jane Harrison. How could I forget her, yes. Jane Harrison was important to me. I have always enjoyed reading Jane. When I was in Cambridge I asked a leading anthropologist who works with classical material, Mary Beard, "What about Jane Harrison?" And she frowned. So Jane Harrison is still, even in classical anthropological circles, not really accepted. Perhaps modern rationalists don't consider her "scientific" enough, but I don't feel that way about her. I have written an article in the Getty journal on Jane Harrison, who I think needs to be rehabilitated.

SMITH: You have met with Burkert from time to time.



HOFFMANN: I have only met Burkert twice. I met him when he came down to Passignano, near Siena. It's a cloister, significantly, where the University of Siena had organized a congress on sacrifice, and various people gave papers, including Burkert, and I met him there for the first time and told him how much I admired his work. He reminded me of a monk. Before this, Burkert and I had collaborated on a paper on a certain type of Greek offering. But I hadn't met him then. We did that through letters. Then I did go up to see him in his institute at the University of Zurich, and we had a pleasant chat. He is an interesting, introverted figure.

SMITH: About this time you also went to the Collège de France and did your course on Dionysus. Could you describe that course?

[Tape IV, Side Two]

HOFFMANN: It was a bit swimming against the current, because I wasn't theoretical enough for the French. I wasn't treating my material as a *jeu de mots*, and I was talking about Dionysus then the way I talk about him in my book. In fact, I used all of my lecture material in my approach to Dionysus in my book, and it wasn't that popular. Vernant at one point accused me of globalism; that's a sin apparently, although everything is going global today.

My other sin was to *généraliser*; it was too general for Vernant. I was bringing in too much in every direction, and I had the feeling that he didn't like it. In the end, after my last lecture, when we were chatting, back at the Centre, I felt that he



was angry at me. Again, this *globaliser* came up and he said, "Mais, fais le Hoffmann, fais le Hoffmann." He repeated it twice, and I felt that he was saying, "Do your own thing and get out, and never come back again." Other people told me, "No, what he means is this is wonderful, and you should go your own way," which is in effect what I have been doing my whole life.

SMITH: In the introduction to *Sotades*, you make it quite clear that you feel a relationship with the Paris School but still very different from them. The people who read you and them together will not find anything like the Paris School in your work, and yet you also want to acknowledge some relationship to it.

HOFFMANN: I want to acknowledge what I have received from them, which has been a great deal, especially from J.-P. Vernant, and from François Lissarrague. You will have noticed that François Lissarrague contributed the drawings to my book. We speak the same language; we are on the same wavelength, absolutely. At the same time there is one little technical difficulty which makes for something other than total confluence, and that is the matter of the function of Greek vases.

Now, I am often connected with a heresy called "Vickerism." Michael Vickers has written a book which has appeared in the same series as *Sotades*, called [*Artful Crafts*, with David Gill]. In that book he states as fact that Greek vases were never used for actual banqueting. I think he is right, and I still do tend to agree with Michael that probably in Greek society precious metal and silverware were what the





elite were using for banqueting, not clay. I think that there has been an exaggerated importance ascribed to the vase painter and potter. I suspect that perhaps they were in fact simply producing inexpensive devotional objects, in a word, religious art. I don't feel that that is a denigration of pottery; quite the contrary, I would say it gains in significance. But at this point the question of whether it's clay, earthenware, bronze, or silver isn't really significant in terms of my own work with imagery, because I am convinced that the imagery on these vessels would probably be much the same, whatever they were made of. These were the same people, and whether they were goldsmiths or metalsmiths or potters, it's the same culture, the same society, and there would be the same values, the same system of belief, and probably the same imagery everywhere.

Something that opened my eyes to this likelihood was travel in Bali. Much has disappeared, but thirty-five or forty years ago there was still this live tradition of religious art. No distinction was made between secular and religious. Still today you find the same subjects in the temples and in so-called daily life; it's all one. So the more we try to become aware of our dualistic habit of thinking in our scholarly analysis, the more we should take into account that ancient people probably felt differently and were more in touch with themselves.

SMITH: Is this reference to Bali part of what Vernant was criticizing as "globalism"?

HOFFMANN: I am sure.



SMITH: Were you also bringing in what you had been learning about South Asian religions? The mystic traditions?

HOFFMANN: I suspect I may have been, because at that time I was indeed much *into*, as the Californians say, "Eastern" thinking, which I realize today is probably not so much different from Western thinking some hundreds of years ago. Since the triumph of dualism in Catholic doctrine in about the fifth century A.D., there has been a total polarization between East and West, but I don't think that necessarily was the case in Heraclitus' day.

SMITH: So you feel that mysticism, even Eastern mysticism, may be relevant for a fuller understanding of ancient Greece.

HOFFMANN: Yes. A name comes to mind, just for the record, and that is [F. M.] Cornford. Cornford was interested in mysticism, and he was the first to collate pre-Socratic thinking with mysticism. He was an important source for me. If you mentioned Cornford in Cambridge today, people would probably smile benignly or get angry, but he was a great scholar. [E. R.] Dodds acknowledges his indebtedness to him, and I think he is another figure that needs rehabilitation.

SMITH: It took you twenty years to write the *Sotades* book. I wonder to what degree that was because you had a philosophical sense of detachment from the profession, a lot of other things you were exploring, or was it that the material itself required more time?





HOFFMANN: Each chapter in the Sotades book was like writing a book in itself. It required as much research. I approached it very slowly and laboriously, usually presenting one chapter as a lecture somewhere and then going on to the next material, just hoping that that too would fall into place, which it did. But after having done that, chapter for chapter, there was the greater problem of boiling it down, making it jive in a presentable way. I knew the connections, they were there in my mind, but getting them on paper was extremely difficult and required two years after all the research was done, just writing and rewriting.

My dear friend Edward Kern, the former Education Editor at *Life* magazine, was a great help to me. He got no material remuneration for it; he was just doing it out of friendship and out of his love for ancient Greece. I think at one point in his life he would have liked to become a classicist. He came over here and we went over it and I spent time with him on Nantucket, going over it and back and forth, and in the end an incredible amount of time and hard work went into it. I can't see how anybody can do something like that if he is career-making. Today it would have to be a teamwork project. I think that's where the only hope for this kind of work lies, and there doesn't seem to be much teamwork going on in the classics or in archaeology.

SMITH: Were you working within a semiotic ideology on that book?

HOFFMANN: Somewhat, yes, although if you ask me right now I probably wouldn't even be able to tell you what a semiotic ideology is.



SMITH: I ask that in part because that's how you have been described, as working in a semiotic and structuralist ideology.

HOFFMANN: I think people have to have a pigeonhole to put you into, and if they can't say that Hoffmann is the expert for *rhyta* and Greek jewelry, then he's working in a semiotic way, which means it's none of our business and we'll leave it to the semioticians or semioticians, or whatever they are called. Again, it's like leaving religion to the theologians; it means one doesn't want to get involved, because I don't think any semiotician you give this book to would be very interested in it.

SMITH: Not as semiotics, perhaps, but I did want to ask you that, because the first phrase that was associated with your name for me was semiotic and structuralist archaeology.

HOFFMANN: Well, I will be interested to see what happens after Tromsö, because Jasper Jespro, who is a very senior semiotician, will be up there, and I am looking forward to discussing my work with him. The lecture will be some sort of lodestone, I suppose. And Jan Bremmer will be there also. So there may be answers coming up.

SMITH: I'd like to pursue some of the conceptual frameworks in *Sotades*. I am not asking you to give a theoretical exposition but more a genealogical reflection; in addition to whatever archaeological or anthropological connections there might be, how do the conceptual frameworks within the work relate to your experience as a Gestalt therapist, as a student of mysticism, as an olive farmer, and as a sculptor?

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SESSION THREE: 23 MAY, 1998

[Tape V, Side One]

SMITH: This morning, before we get into *Sotades*, I wanted to go back to the seventies. Yesterday you mentioned R. D. Laing, whom you did therapy with, and trained with.

HOFFMANN: Yes, Ronald Laing, being who he was, it was never quite clear what one was doing or what he was doing. I was involved with the Philadelphia Association in London, and I went to see him once a week, and from my point of view it was training, and from his point of view it may have been indulgence, or compassion, or something like that. Or maybe he just liked me, I don't know. I used to see him once a week, go to his home out in . . . Heath something or other.

SMITH: Hampstead Heath?

HOFFMANN: Hampstead Heath, exactly. I got to know Francis Huxley, who also lived up there, through Ronald. He was also involved with all these things, with phenomenology, with shamanism, with anthropology. But coming back to Ronald Laing, he was a strange and amusing and interesting man. During a session with him, I might be talking to him and he would be looking out the window with a joint in his mouth. He seemed to be bored, and after a while one would get the point that it was words, words, words. Another time, I had prepared all week and had really structured this precious session with the great Ronald Laing, and he got up and said,





"I want to play something for you on the piano," and he started playing the piano.

Another time he got up without saying a thing and went over to the wall and did the most incredible yoga headstand—rather than saying, "I think you ought to do yoga."

In fact, it got me into yoga.

SMITH: Oh, really?

HOFFMANN: Yes. That was Laing's approach. Let me tell you one more anecdote.

Laing said at one point, quite unconnectedly, "I think you ought to read Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, whereupon I bought this heavy tome on thin paper and put it in my knapsack—I was about to leave for Greece. I started reading it and I got more and more frustrated, and at one point I just threw it out the window. It's probably still lying there somewhere on the island of Hydra. I thought that I had gotten the point, that it was just like flexing a muscle to the point of bursting and then letting go and releasing. Today, I think that he may have meant it literally! He indeed may have wanted me to read Hegel. What I did read at that time, influenced by Laing and the Philadelphia Association, was [Maurice] Merleau-Ponty, whom everyone was reading And Heidegger, [Edmund] Husserl, especially, the phenomenologists.

SMITH: Did any of this make sense in terms of archaeology, or were these two separate realms?

HOFFMANN: No, this was still separate, this was all therapy training; it was, however, making subliminal sense.



SMITH: But here you have these objects that are an extension of people's creativity, their perception, having meaning for them, and yet it didn't seem to connect at that point.

HOFFMANN: No, because at that point I still had no intention of going back to archaeology.

SMITH: Oh, I see, yes. I thought, also, you might just mention a couple of the masters in India that you studied with.

HOFFMANN: Yes. "Studied" is perhaps giving me too much credit. Let's say I exposed myself in various ways, at various levels, to various people. The first name that comes to mind is Ramana Maharshi, who was long dead, but I was aware of him through my readings in Jung. Jung had been on his way to visit Ramana Maharshi and got cold feet at the last moment and never in fact did meet him. I thought this was interesting, and maybe it ought to be followed up. Many years later, I did, in fact, visit his ashram at Tiruvannamalai in southern India.

I did see Shree Bhagwan Rajneesh in Poona; everyone was going to see him at that time, especially the therapists. I was never involved with the community there, but I did some groups and I heard his discourses. I was deeply impressed by his clarity and vision. I should add that I discovered Shree Nisargadatta Maharaj, known as the "bidi guru," in a bookshop in Poona. The title of his book, *I am That*, immediately struck me because I had noted that Rajneesh had something similar on

[The text on this page is extremely faint and illegible. It appears to be a list or a series of entries, possibly organized into columns or sections. Some faint headings or markers are visible, but the specific content cannot be transcribed.]



the spare tire of his car, "Thou Art That." And there I saw it on Nisargadatta's book, *I Am That*. It's a very basic concept and it's what the phenomenologists in effect were talking about in very complicated terms. What is meant is the identity of subject and object, or *tattva*, as it is called in the Rigveda. Nondualism, in a word.

I began realizing that European philosophers were in effect saying much the same thing that Indian mystics were saying, but in very complicated terms. In India, I found that it is not all that difficult. *Tattva* means literally *thingness*; it is what Heidegger calls *das Ding an sich*, the thing in itself. I previously never had any idea what it meant; I was forced onto my knees, so to speak, trying to comprehend what Heidegger was talking about, and there it was, all being expressed very clearly in experiential terms, *that-ness*: the identity of the inner and the outer, the god within one, in a word.

SMITH: But isn't part of Heidegger to express being outside of experiential terms?

HOFFMANN: Yes perhaps, but it's not the way my mind works; I never could understand Heidegger. Now, this morning, just because it came up yesterday, I was looking in my library, at Merleau-Ponty, Husserl, and particularly Heidegger, and I was thinking, "Either these people are all plagiarists, or they are making things very, very complicated, or both." It is not as difficult as all that. And I think that brings us back to Sotades. This idea of the connectedness of things is not all that difficult, in fact it's so obvious. That gave me the courage to attempt bringing it all together with

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my Greek material.

SMITH: In your studies in Jung, did that turn you on to the gnostics? He writes about the gnostic tradition and refers to them quite a bit.

HOFFMANN: I never went beyond Jung at that time. I read about the gnostics, I read about alchemy, I read about transformation, but I never really delved into it deeply. I only discovered Elaine Pagel's wonderful book, *The Gnostic Gospels*, published in 1979, very recently. I still have a lot of reading to do,

SMITH: As I mentioned at the end of yesterday's session, I did want to turn to *Sotades* and look at some of the issues you are dealing with there in terms of constructing genealogical connections and how your archaeological work, your work with the objects, connects to your interests in Eastern mysticism, to Gestalt and various forms of therapy, as well as to your life as a farmer. I wanted to talk about some of the concepts that you use, some of which you do cite sources for, but I don't want to limit you; you can go beyond what I am asking. One of the things that you attribute to Edmund Leach is the idea of reverse or non-sense sacrifice.

HOFFMANN: Yes.

SMITH: I am just wondering if you could reconstruct that—

HOFFMANN: Yes, I would say that's Herbert Hoffmann trying to be a French structuralist. I would have to really strain my head very hard to reconstruct it all and I would probably end up with a headache on reverse sacrifice. I won't dismiss it and



it's there, if anyone wants to consult it.

SMITH: So this is part of the issue of polarities that you started to deal with then.

HOFFMANN: Reverse *world* is a different concept. Reverse world comes in a great deal and it's something that's more alive than reverse sacrifice.

SMITH: Okay.

HOFFMANN: Reverse world you have everywhere, once you start looking for it; it was an important concept to artists like Breughel: the *mondus inversus*. Jung uses it. It gave me a key to interpreting some very odd Sotadean imagery, like pygmies battling cranes, which never made sense to me, and in terms of reverse world, it immediately all made sense and fell into place. It's all there in the book.

SMITH: The person you cite vis-à-vis the reverse world imagery of Dionysus is Hedwig Kenner.

HOFFMANN: Hedwig Kenner wrote a book called *Verkehrte Welt*. I don't recall much of what she says, but she does discuss the reverse world in Christian symbolism. Yes, Kenner I found very interesting reading. Limited, but something that could be expanded.

SMITH: This is not in *Sotades*, but in your article on *rhyta* for the Getty journal, you say you discussed the dimidiating *rhyta* with Lévi-Strauss, but you don't indicate what happened in that discussion.

HOFFMANN: I brought photographs to him of this dimidiating *rhyton* in Baltimore





and I should explain that "dimidiating" means joint; it's a split *rhyton*, and half of it is a donkey's head and half of it is a ram's head. I took it to Lévi-Strauss and he was very interested, he said, "Yes, of course," and he put me onto a whole literature on the subject, mostly by him, in the *Anthropologie structurale*. He has a chapter there on split representation, split masks. You also have it in his little gem of a book called *La Voie des masques*, and it got me thinking in structuralist terms about this polarity, and the concept of mediation, which I used, which comes from Lévi-Strauss.

I should say maybe a few words about Lévi-Strauss, because, after all, he is dead and he made a great mark on his generation. He was literally a monument. If I think back now of Lévi-Strauss I see him two or three times life size, sitting on a marble throne. Absolutely a monumental figure. Not really a very human figure. A bit like Beazley.

SMITH: That matches the tone of *Tristes tropiques*—warm, but aloof.

HOFFMANN: Very aloof, yes. Beazley I wouldn't even call warm. Beazley I recall as being cold and aloof.

SMITH: The polarity of psyche and ego is quite important in *Sotades*, as you develop it, and I wonder if you could discuss what psyche and ego mean to you as contemporary terms, and whether the twentieth-century concepts that we have relate to the fifth-century Greek experience in some direct way?

HOFFMANN: It doesn't really ring a bell, offhand, the polarity of psyche and ego.



The way I use psyche in the book, and I'm not sure that I use it consistently, is as something almost synonymous with "soul," whereas ego I probably use more in the Jungian sense of persona, meaning the conscious, outer being.

SMITH: You talk of the civic realm as egocentric.

HOFFMANN: Ah, yes.

SMITH: And then the mystic as connected to the soul, which is what preceded the body and will survive the body, as you say at one point.

HOFFMANN: Possibly, possibly. I think that polarity is tantamount to what Jung calls *self*, with a small "s" and with a capital "S." I personally have no beliefs on survival, or anything like that.

SMITH: But in your thinking, is the ego, or the self, connected to what we might now call society, rather than the polis?

HOFFMANN: Yes, I would say that it's part of our . . . the word I am looking for is not indoctrination, it's—

SMITH: Socialization?

HOFFMANN: Yes, or conditioning. The ego is something learned; it's something that has much to do with role understanding of who we are.

SMITH: In terms of the therapeutic training that you received, is much of it oriented then to releasing the "self," with a capital "S"?

HOFFMANN: I would say so, yes. For instance, I recall once doing a creative





writing course. It was really an exercise in Zen, letting go of the mind and just giving yourself permission to stop thinking and write and write and not stop writing. I found, amazingly, that creativity was there—creativity which none of us in the group suspected that we ever had. I think that any poet is aware of this, that good writing has to do with letting go, of releasing the rational mind, putting it aside the way one puts a pair of shoes aside for the moment, to be put back on when needed. Getting in touch with one's creativity can thus be seen to be getting in touch with one's "self" with a capital "S," or with the god within.

SMITH: Did this then lead you to think of the everyday rituals in which the *rhyta* were being used as vehicles for the momentary release of soul?

HOFFMANN: That's rather far out; it's something that I put out as bait in this lecture that I am about to give, suggesting that not necessarily *rhyta*, but any kind of image of figurative representation on ceramic or on any sort of an object, or on a mirror, an engraving, whatever, might well have been used in the way that the tankas are used by Tibetans, as a way of focusing, of entering into myth for purposes of visualization, for activating the symbol process. Of course I would need a time machine to go back and see; it's just a wild idea, pure speculation.

SMITH: And is there no way that archaeologists or philologists could test this speculative proposition?

HOFFMANN: I don't really know. The only way that I can talk about is my way, the



way I arrived at it, and that is experiential, going back to Ronald Laing. Going into the mind, observing it, trying to find out what it is and how it works.

SMITH: So when you use the term "phenomenological" in *Sotades*, that really refers back to Laing and perhaps the movements parallel to that, such as Gestalt, or Alan Watts, not so much to Heidegger.

HOFFMANN: You are right. And certainly not to the Gestalt philosophers like Wertheimer.

SMITH: The one I know best is Wolfgang Köhler.

HOFFMANN: Yes, Köhler is the man whose name I was trying to get, thank you.

SMITH: So for you phenomenology is a discipline rather than a philosophy, if I can make that distinction?

HOFFMANN: I think I would go along with that, yes. I am thinking about it. It's a way of looking, a way of awareness. You asked me about Indian mystics. I forgot an important man and that's of course Krishnamurti. Awareness to him is everything. Awareness, and remembering, and looking. I used to go to Krishnamurti's Saanen gatherings yearly, as well as to Ojai when he was there, and the meetings at Brockwood Park in England. He was an important figure for my entire generation. His writings make very beautiful reading, especially the earlier ones, the . . .

*Commentaries on Living.*

SMITH: With your chapter, "Aletheia," you use a term which doesn't belong to

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . It is shown that the system has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  if and only if the condition  $\alpha + \beta = 1$  is satisfied.

2. In the second part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  is solved. It is shown that the system has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  if and only if the condition  $\alpha + \beta = 1$  is satisfied. The solutions are found in explicit form.

3. In the third part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  is solved. It is shown that the system has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  if and only if the condition  $\alpha + \beta = 1$  is satisfied.

4. In the fourth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  is solved. It is shown that the system has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  if and only if the condition  $\alpha + \beta = 1$  is satisfied. The solutions are found in explicit form.

5. In the fifth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  is solved. It is shown that the system has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  if and only if the condition  $\alpha + \beta = 1$  is satisfied.

Heidegger, but, nonetheless—

HOFFMANN: Yes, he does use it. "Aletheia" is actually a plagiarism from Heidegger. It's a little book of Heidegger's on the pre-Socratic philosophers. There is a chapter on Parmenides' use of the term in the great didactic fragment.

SMITH: So for you, in that chapter, you are rethinking Parmenides, or you are rethinking the objects in relationship to Parmenides.

HOFFMANN: Yes, yes. Not very competently so, because I am not a philosopher.

SMITH: What about the concept of deep play?

HOFFMANN: Clifford Geertz. Nothing comes up, I am sorry. What does come up is his wonderful paper called "The Balinese Cockfight," which got me involved with cock fights on Greek vases, looking at them in a different light, in that paper of 1974, which we discussed yesterday.

SMITH: So this precedes your formal plunge into anthropology?

HOFFMANN: That was published in 1974. Somebody sent it to me; in fact, Geertz may have sent me a reprint. He was a friend of my aunt's.

SMITH: You talk about mystic initiation as a descent, so I am wondering, having just looked at Ken Wilber, is that a parallelism?

HOFFMANN: Initiation I don't think of as a descent; I think of it more as an opening, neither an ascent nor a descent, but simply an opening of another dimension. By descent perhaps Wilber means going into depth.





SMITH: He also connects it with this concept of flatland, that you descend into the *here*.

HOFFMANN: Does he? I am surprised to hear that; I'll have to look at it.

SMITH: You descend from transcendence and aspiration for something beyond into the immediate here and now. You descend into sensory awareness.

HOFFMANN: Yes, in the sense of bringing transcendence and immanence together; that's what Wilber is talking about and in that sense initiation is of course a bringing together and in that sense it is a new beginning. It plays a certain role in my book because it's important as a concept, and also as an experiential reality.

SMITH: The union of ego and psyche, of civic and mystic, of life and death.

HOFFMANN: Yes, I think he may call that initiation.

SMITH: You also use the phrase "immortality ideology." I would like to explore where that comes from and what it means to you in terms of the structure of what you are doing.

HOFFMANN: Yes, it's a big subject, immortality and immortality ideology. The way the term is used by the French, in particular by the Vernantian school of thinking, is something which Wilber would call "immanent" or "descended." It is making your name. It's the idea of making your name remembered by future generations. It's what is said about you at your funeral and what will go on in immortal memory. That's a kind of immortality ideology that was very popular in my father's generation, the First



World War generation; in fact, the Second World War generation as well. It's what war memorials are about. I don't think much of it myself. It's not my idea of immortality. I discuss it in *Sotades* as the one half of the picture.

SMITH: And the other half?

HOFFMANN: The other half I develop as being synonymous with enlightenment.

SMITH: But *Erleuchtung* not *Aufklärung*.

HOFFMANN: *Erleuchtung*, not *Aufklärung*. It's interesting that in German you have two words: you have *die Aufklärung*, which means the French Enlightenment, and you have *Erleuchtung*. *Aufklärung* means bringing in reason, rationality, rationalism. *Erleuchtung* means bringing in light. And it's in that sense that I think initiation brings in light. In the mystic tradition, in the Egyptian tradition, in the gnostic tradition, it's opening the inner eye, or turning the arrow of awareness to look in.

SMITH: Which is what you associate with the figure of Polyidos.

HOFFMANN: Yes, the seer.

SMITH: Does Glaukos, who is initiated into a seer become the same kind of seer, or is there a difference between the two figures?

HOFFMANN: No, I think he becomes the same kind. He may become the successor, but a seer is a seer. There are parallels to shamanism, because shamans do cross between these various realms of past, present, and future. Geoffrey Lloyd has





been exploring similar avenues, seeing what early Chinese philosophy and religion may have in common with early Greek philosophers. There are connections. We know that there are connections in fact between Greece and Egypt and between Greece and India as well, and between Greece and China. So I find it more interesting to ask questions rather than to say, "No, you can't answer this, so don't ask the question," which is what rationalist empiricism is about.

SMITH: Empiricism is about, "Don't ask the question"?

HOFFMANN: It means, "Don't get me involved," or, "It's not my field."

SMITH: Okay. You discuss some of the elements in *Sotades* in terms of projection, which of course is a psychological term.

HOFFMANN: It's what we are doing half the time. Projection is an important experience to acknowledge, because most of us are projecting half the time, and many people project ninety percent of the time. The more aware you become, the less you project, but the point is that projection is something we do, and I think we have to acknowledge it.

[Tape V, Side Two]

HOFFMANN: It's part of the subjective aspect, which I think should be considered an integral and necessary part of scholarship. All scholars project *de facto*; yet very few would admit this. They would say, "You are crazy, I am being objective. Look at footnote 27, or 271. This is all very scholarly."



SMITH: Well, in some fields, my field in particular, the more footnotes you have the more of an authority you are; you get very lengthy footnote sections.

HOFFMANN: Yes, well of course there must be footnotes and there should be footnotes, and footnotes aren't always projection, the projection may come in quite elsewhere; it may come in the choice of why you chose this rather than that for your article or for your thesis, for whatever is shaping your life at the moment or whatever is ongoing.

SMITH: Okay, then why Sotades?

HOFFMANN: Why Sotades? Ah, a very good question. It goes back very far. As I explain in the preface, I had all that good material, and beyond that—

SMITH: You had much good material that you had been accumulating in your archive?

HOFFMANN: In a different way. I was doing more the shapes and the painters and then at one point I saw that this material was full of fascinating questions, so why not tackle it and see if it could all be brought together. This was when archaeology became interesting again. Clifford Geertz again: "culture is whole." But why Sotades in particular? Aside from the aesthetic aspect, I was getting involved in mythology at a deeper level and I imagine that the Jungian, the Freudian, the Gestalt, and all the rest of it had opened me up for looking more deeply into myth.

SMITH: You deal with a number of images or forms, and a number of myths. I



wonder if you could discuss the images and the myths that called to you the most.

HOFFMANN: That talked to me?

SMITH: That talked to you, yes.

HOFFMANN: Well, yes there was Glaukos and Polyidos of course. Glaukos is initiation and both he and Polyides are denizens of the *Zwischenwelt*, as Paul Klee calls it, the passing from the one to the other—that I find very interesting, as a concept as well as an actuality. Being in two worlds.

SMITH: Two worlds, so they see what is present but not visible.

HOFFMANN: Exactly. And by a similar token we can see what is present and not visible if we look at our dreams.

SMITH: The other night, when we were having dinner, I said something to the effect that your approach was different from a connoisseur's, and you said, "But I am a connoisseur." I still think that your approach is different from a connoisseur's. Do you see things as a connoisseur that you wouldn't see if you didn't have that training?

HOFFMANN: Certainly. I have come to realize at this point in my life that paradox is part of life; you have to acknowledge it. Life is not a question of this or that; it always is this *and* that.

SMITH: Is this part of the process that brought you back into archaeology after your retreat from it?

HOFFMANN: Yes, definitely. I saw that life needs to be integrated, and that this is





important.

SMITH: You had moved for a while in the direction of switching into anthropology and becoming a—

HOFFMANN: Becoming a professional anthropologist, yes.

SMITH: But then it sounds like anthropology also failed to provide you what archaeology had lacked. Or it failed you in a way that perhaps was not the same.

HOFFMANN: In a similar way, I should say. Let's put it this way: I wouldn't say anthropology failed me, but my relationship was similar to orthodox archaeology. I started being put off anthropology as a possible teaching career by the way it started going after Leach was no longer there, and after the older generation died. It happened within about five years or so, I would get book catalogs from Routledge or Oxford and I couldn't even read the titles, not to mention the books themselves, because they were so cryptic, so obscure, so insider language that it literally put me off. I do still call myself a classical archaeologist, but I am . . . Oh! You see, a Freudian slip of the tongue. I mean classical *anthropologist*, but I consider it a field of my own in which I am free to read what interests me in *any* field.

SMITH: Actually, there is one anthropologist whom I didn't find cited, and that is Mary Douglas.

HOFFMANN: Mary Douglas is cited.

SMITH: Oh, I didn't see it.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
THE  
CITY  
OF  
NEW  
YORK  
FROM  
1609  
TO  
1812  
BY  
JOHN  
B. HOGGINS  
NEW  
YORK  
1812

HOFFMANN: Yes, her work on natural symbols in particular quite fascinated me. In fact, Mary Douglas, Victor Turner, and Leach are very much a part of anthropology that is useful in my work. I am getting a bit out of touch with what is going on in anthropology because it is so difficult now. I would have to go back and speak to young anthropologists. But thinking of Mary Douglas and her natural symbols, I'll come back to your earlier question about what farming has meant. Of course, aside from providing good olive oil and good wine, it has meant learning what natural symbols are. Let me just give you an example. Coming back to *Sotades*, I never would have picked up on the image of olive clippings. I looked at that ram's head *rhyton* in Hamburg closely with a magnifying glass and I said, "Of course, these are *olive* clippings," not simply twigs. I wouldn't have known if I hadn't been pruning olives here every year, because I have a lot of olives down there and they need to be pruned. It's a lot of work, it's a science that I have learned, and that has also come into scholarship.

Or Glaukos: knowing the habits of the owl. I became interested in owls because you hear them every night here. I'll show you one I have done in alabaster, it's quite a nice piece. Why is the owl the bird of Athena? I started asking questions that I might not have asked otherwise. And Chianti is the land of wine, it's Dionysus, and you see not only grape vines here, you will also see lots of ivy, these creeping vines, everywhere. I have to deal with them because they will kill the oaks if I





don't cut them.

SMITH: And snakes?

HOFFMANN: Snakes too. In fact, where you are sitting is where they live, the Asklepios snakes. There is a pair of them that should be mating at this time of year, right where we are sitting. If I am very lucky I will be able to see them mating again. I have seen them do it twice. They rear up and coil around each other in the form of a Caduceus, and it's incredible. Having seen it, you realize, "My god, of course, this is what *they* saw."

SMITH: I would like to explore your thoughts on death, since that is central to *Sotades*, partly because of what the objects are produced for, but also the mysteries that revolve around what death is.

HOFFMANN: That's a good one. Normally, I would want a few hours time off to organize my thoughts, but no, let's just do it here and now. In the book there is a sentence that says, "There would be no religion if there were no death." Death is central to all philosophy, to all religion; it's the number one question in life. Life is finite and this creates a paradox because on the one hand we do have this inner knowledge that there is no death; that you are neither born nor die, but it's knowledge we continuously forget.

So there is also this clinging to life, clinging to the body, which makes us worry about wrinkles and put creams on the skin. So it is a paradox. All of us, I



think, have this inner knowledge, or other awareness of death. So the aim I think is not to deny death but to bring death in as the other side of life, as the polarity, and then you find that it suddenly can be very fructifying, very fertilizing even to your scholarship.

SMITH: What about Philippe Ariès? You mention his name in your books.

HOFFMANN: I have read his two books on death and I have found them quite enlightening. I read them when I was writing *Sotades*. Research on death and dying is quite fascinating. There are two sides to it. One is scholarly and the other is autobiographical. Sally [Sarah C.] Humphreys has written on death and immortality, and good anthropology has been done on the subject by Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry (*Death and the Regeneration of Life*).

SMITH: What about Emily Vermeule's work?

HOFFMANN: Emily Vermeule's work, I am glad you mentioned it. *Aspects of Death* is a very human, very deep book in Wilber's sense, a very wonderful book. I have never discussed it with her—I hope to have a chance to. It's a book that I found really inspiring. So there are two aspects: one is the scholarly, and one is the personal, which moves one to get involved with things like the hospice movement, working for a more humane form of dying.

SMITH: Do you have another book planned?

HOFFMANN: I have a lot of files, but nothing that I want to discuss at this point.

[The text on this page is extremely faint and illegible. It appears to be a standard page of prose with several paragraphs. The layout includes a header section at the top, followed by multiple paragraphs of text. There are some faint markings that could be section breaks or paragraph indicators, but they cannot be definitively identified.]

SMITH: Well, that's fair of course. In working on *Sotades* you didn't just work with photographs. I assume that you went to each of the institutions.

HOFFMANN: Yes. I think I can say that I handled each piece. Photographs won't do, really. That's where connoisseurship comes in. I feel you have to look at the material. I love going to museums.

SMITH: So you got on jets and you went to almost all the institutions.

HOFFMANN: I got on jets and I went not only to institutions to look at objects, but I also went far in the world to look at people.

SMITH: But iconography and iconology are ostensibly about meaning, and connoisseurship is seldom related to meaning.

HOFFMANN: Iconology is about meaning, iconography less so. Iconography moves horizontally, iconology moves vertically.

SMITH: But isn't there a different kind of meaning that comes from connoisseurship?

HOFFMANN: Let me think about it for a moment: meaning and connoisseurship, how does it work? Of course, it makes good sense: I take something in my hands and I am attracted, and it's that initial ignition that makes me decide unconsciously if I want to pursue this further or if I want to put it back in the case or drawer. In that sense connoisseurship would come in, bringing me out of the horizontal into the vertical dimension.

SMITH: Opening up the iconology.



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HOFFMANN: Opening up to iconology, quite.

SMITH: I want to go back to the level of broad generalization. The role of gender and sexual underpinnings in the work: it's there, you write about it, though it's not thematized in quite the same way.

HOFFMANN: I would have to work very hard to get into it and my energy is moving down a bit. Gender or sexuality as themes interested me at one time, during my Reichian period. I can't get too enthused about it today. It's not that I am not a sexual being, but going into it from the head doesn't intrigue me. You are talking about gender studies?

SMITH: Well, are there fundamental sexual differences in your perspective? Does nature lead to a difference between male and female that runs through being, which culture then articulates in various ways?

HOFFMANN: Certainly there is the polarity of male and female. I just sent a fax this morning to my colleague, Stella Lubsen Admiraal, who is working on Gaia, the earth goddess, because I noticed that a Greek scholar will be giving a paper on Gaia in Tromsø. I don't know what she will be saying, I don't know if she is a feminist, but I will be interested to see if her approach is the same as Stella's. But again, I am not a theorizer about sexuality.

SMITH: Even in terms of your therapeutic work? Do you have presuppositions that you bring to that?



HOFFMANN: No, I follow the client. I am non-directive and I am very careful not to interfere. Whatever it is that has to be resolved, whether it is problems with mother or father or husband or homosexuality, I don't interfere; I just follow it with interest.

SMITH: You also had mentioned yesterday that much of this movement that drew you along through the late sixties and into the seventies had to do with what you phrased "the problem of the European intellectual," and I suppose I could understand that as disembodiment, or cerebreality?

HOFFMANN: My own, yes, of course. I no longer see it as a problem because I no longer have the problem. If I do have the problem I am sufficiently aware of my body to notice. I notice I am getting a backache, or now I am getting a headache, and it's time to stop—watch out. That's been the result of therapy, the result of living in nature, a more holistic way of life, and it makes for better scholarship, I think.

SMITH: One minor thing, then we could end: In the mid-seventies you were working with Hedwig Schleiffer?

HOFFMANN: Yes, Hedwig Schleiffer was my aunt.

SMITH: Oh, really? *The Anthropology of Sacred Plants in the Old and New Worlds?*

HOFFMANN: Yes. Heddy has been dead now for some years. She was a friend of Clifford Geertz. She wrote these two books, all on the strength of her linguistic

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skills. She knew many languages: Portuguese, Spanish, French, Russian. She was a research assistant at the Widener Library at Harvard, and the botanist [Richard Evans] Schultes at the department of pharmacology and botany at Harvard put her on to working with sacred plants. Her first volume was *Sacred Plants in the Old World*, which I found very useful. It became a kind of bible for the hippy generation; they all started buying this book and it actually sold very well. By the time she got her second book out, *The Sacred Plants of the New World*, I think the tide had passed. Yes, of course pharmacology also enters into *Sotades*. My footnotes on ivy, for example. I suspect that ivy played an important role in Dionysian cult, because otherwise why would it be equal to the grape in the iconography?

SMITH: I was curious about what happened with that project and how it related to your other work.

HOFFMANN: It's quite simple: my aunt died. I enjoyed working with her. I was hoping that I would be able to get to know Professor Schultes, but he has now died as well.

SMITH: Before we end, I wanted to give you the opportunity for any closing thoughts.

HOFFMANN: Those are nice sounds, the Californian wind chime blending in with the plane going by. A lovely image to end on.



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